

The Telegraph



SARTORIAL SAGA

Standout looks at MET Gala 2025



GENERAL RECALLS

Baffle walls, trenches in war-time Calcutta

HARVARD HIT JOB

Varsity disqualified from future research grants

HAT-TRICK CHANCE

Knights eye win vs CSK to stay in playoffs race



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IN BRIEF

India hits Pak terror bases

■ NEW DELHI: The Indian armed forces launched Operation Sindo early on Wednesday as retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack, hitting terror bases in Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Nine sites were targeted. The defence ministry said the actions were "focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature". No Pakistani military facilities were targeted, the ministry added. India said "considerable restraint" had been demonstrated "in selection of targets and method of execution." Pakistan Army's DG, ISPR, said: "Let me say it unequivocally, Pakistan will respond to this at a time and place of its own choosing. All Pakistan Air Force jets are airborne... the DG said, adding that the strike was from Indian airspace. "Justice is served," the Indian Army said.

Trump tariff claim

■ WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday claimed that India has agreed to remove all American imports to "nothing", asserting that the decision was made solely because of him. India has not officially announced any such decision.

IPL MOMENT

Jasprit Bumrah produced a superb two-over spell during which he took two wickets but it wasn't enough as the Titans pulled off a three-wicket victory against Mumbai Indians on Tuesday. The Titans had everything in their control but Bumrah's two wickets after the rain break upset their momentum. They, however, came back to knock off the 15 needed off the 19th over to reach the DLS target of 147.

Mock drills across country today

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi: Union home secretary Govind Mohan on Tuesday chaired a meeting with several high-ranking officials and reviewed preparations to strengthen civil defence mechanisms a day ahead of the nationwide mock drills amid escalating tensions with Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack.

On Wednesday, the Indian Air Force will also hold "pre-planned, routine" military drills in Rajasthan along the international border with Pakistan. Sources said a Notam, or Notice to Airmen, had been issued for the exercises. On May 7 and 8, scheduled to begin at 9.30pm, the drills will continue for eight hours, during which flight operations at airports close to the border would be suspended.

The home ministry had on Monday announced that mock drills — the first since the 1971 war — would be conducted at 24 designated civil defence districts across the country. The development comes at a time India is weighing its options to avenge the Pahalgam massacre and Pakistan has warned of a "swift and noched-up response".

Sources said Mohan convened Tuesday's meeting to assess and coordinate civil defence preparedness with special focus on 100 of the 244 locations that had been identified by the secretary. Sources said the sensitive sites were located in bordering areas. The meeting was also attended by the chief secretaries of various states.

A list of vital installations codified under the Civil Defence Rules, 1968, includes defence and paramilitary installations, hospitals and installations of strategic importance.

The drills will focus on

how to respond to air raid sirens and blackout sirens.

People would be instructed

to keep medical kits with

extra supplies, torches

and candles at home.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ▶

WHAT TO EXPECT



Civil defence personnel in Lucknow on Tuesday during a rehearsal for Wednesday's mock drill. (PTI)

The Union home ministry has asked states to conduct civil defence mock drills on Wednesday amid heightened tensions with Pakistan. The exercise will be conducted across the 244 categorised civil defence districts nationwide down to the village level. The drill aims to assess and enhance the readiness of civil defence mechanisms across all states and Union Territories.

Government sources said such a large-scale mock drill would be taking place for the first time since the 1971 Bangladesh war.

What is a civil defence mock drill?

It is an exercise to identify overall strengths, weaknesses and gaps while responding to emergencies like war or aerial strikes or any kind of hostile attack from air, land and sea.

What will happen during the mock drill?

Sources said the drills would be conducted in the designated civil defence districts in coordination with state and local authorities. The public may experience brief power outages, blackout simulations, loud sirens, mobile signal disruptions and limited access to certain public spaces. Temporary traffic diversions may also occur in some areas where police and paramilitary troops are likely to stage simulations of war-like scenarios.

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Objectives of the mock drill according to the ministry

- Assessing the effectiveness of air raid warning sirens
- Operationalising hotline/radio communication links with the air force
- Training of civilians, students and others on the civil defence aspects to protect themselves in the event of a hostile attack
- Provisioning for crash blackout measures and assessing their implementation
- Provisioning for early camouflage of vital plants/installations
- Verifying the activation and response of civil defence services, including warden services, firefighting, rescue operations and department management
- Evaluating the preparedness of evacuation plans and their execution

Compiled by Imran Ahmed Siddiqui

BENGAL SITES

Civil defence districts in Bengal where mock drills will be held on Wednesday, as listed by the defence ministry

1. Cooch Behar	17. Islampur
2. Darjeeling	18. Dinhatra
3. Jalpaiguri	19. Mekhliganj
4. Malda	20. Mathabangha
5. Siliguri	21. Kalimpong
6. Greater Calcutta	22. Jalduha
7. Durgapur	23. Kurseong
8. Haldia	24. Kolaghat
9. Hashimara	25. Burdwan
10. Kharagpur	26. Birbhum
11. Birbhum-Asansol	27. East Midnapore
12. Farakka-Khejurihat	28. West Midnapore
13. Chittaranjan	29. Howrah
14. Balurghat	30. Hooghly
15. Alipurduar	31. Murshidabad
16. Raiganj	

'Sensitive' state gears for exigency

PRANESH SARKAR

Calcutta: The government in "sensitive" Bengal will conduct a large-scale emergency preparedness mock drill across 17 districts starting Wednesday.

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Modi: India's waters will flow in India's favour

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asserted that India's waters would flow in the country's favour, obliquely referring to his government's decision to keep the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan in place after the Pahalgam terror attack.

"Ab Bharat ka paani Bharat ke haq mein bahega, Bharat ke haq mein rukega our Bharat ke hi kaam aayega (Now India's waters will flow in India's favour, will stay in India's favour and will be used for India only)." Modi said while addressing the ABP Network India at 2047 Summit in Delhi.

Though Modi did not directly refer to the water treaty being put in abeyance as part of a series of diplomatic pushes

against Pakistan after the Pahalgam carnage, he clearly seemed to be referring to it.

"These days, there is a lot of discussion in the media over water," he remarked with a smile, appearing to refer to India's decision to stop sharing river water with Pakistan.

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STYLED BY SABYA, SRK TAKES FASHION MECCA CROWN

Bling King is all that glitters at Gala



MET MAGICIAN: Shah Rukh Khan attends the 2025 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. (Getty Images, courtesy Sabysachi Mukherjee)

SMITA ROY CHOWDHURY AND SANJALI BRAHMA

Shah Rukh Khan's long-awaited debut on the MET Gala steps lived up to every bit of the expectations that had built up ever since the news of the superstar's appearance at global fashion's biggest stage broke.

The participation was every high since Khan was dressed by none other than Calcutta designer Sabysachi Mukherjee, a favourite of Indian stars for their global appearances.

On Monday night (Tuesday morning in India), New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art's lead carpet pet saw Khan arrive in his signature look, courtesy of Mukherjee, in a look celebrating heritage and maximalist elegance. A blockbuster moment in the making — equal parts red carpet razzle-dazzle and cultural mic drop.

The theme for this year's MET Gala exhibition was "Superfine: Tailoring Black

Style" and the dress code was "Tailored For You".

Khan's look was a masterclass in maximalist suave — a floor-length, elongated coat in Tasmanian superfine wool with monogrammed Japanese horn buttons. The hand-crafted coat was a peak collar and wide lapels, paired with a crepe de chine silk shirt and tailored superfine wool trousers.

The pièce de résistance? A pleated silk cummerbund and the Bengal Tiger Head Cane — an 18k gold work of art adorned with tourmalines, sapphires and diamonds. Custom jewellery from Sabysachi High Jewellery — layered necklaces bearing his initials to a diamond-encrusted "K" (for King Khan) — imbued the look with personal symbolism.

Khan told a fashion magazine during the carpet call: "We have little kids (Suhana, Aryan and AbRam) who are very excited about the MET."

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In Loving Memory of



MOU ROYCHOWDHURY

March 12, 1971 – May 7, 2024
Co-Chairperson, Techno India Group

A year has passed since she merged with the Infinite, yet her refined aesthetic sensibility and graceful life continue to be a source of inspiration.

We remember her with deep reverence and heartfelt prayers. May her gentle smile and dignified presence remain forever etched in our hearts as cherished memories...

Loving Family, Friends, & Colleagues



Techno India Group Family

Israel 'fully disables' Yemen's main airport

Aden: The Israeli military carried out an airstrike on Yemen's main airport in Sanaa on Tuesday, its second attack in two days on Iran-aligned Houthi rebels after a surge in tensions between the group and Israel.

Israel warned people to leave the area around Sanaa International Airport before Tuesday's attack, which it said targeted Houthi infrastructure and "fully disabled the airport". Witnesses later reported four strikes in the capital.

Tensions have been high since the Gaza war began, but have risen further since a Houthi missile landed near Israel's Ben Gurion Airport on Sunday, prompting Israeli air-

strikes on Yemen's Hodeidah port on Monday.

"A short while ago, IDF (Israel Defence Forces) fighter jets struck and damaged Houthi military infrastructure here at the main airport in Sanaa, fully disabling the airport," the Israeli military said.

"The strike was carried out in response to the attack launched by the Houthi terrorist regime against Ben Gurion Airport. Flight runways, aircraft and infrastructure at the airport were struck."

The Israeli military said the strike targeted three civilian airplanes, the departures hall, the airport runway and a military air base under Houthi control.



Smoke billows after an Israeli airstrike on Houthi infrastructure in Sanaa, Yemen, on Tuesday. (Reuters)

Three airport sources told Reuters that the strike had targeted three civilian airplanes, the departures hall, the airport runway and a military air base under Houthi control.

The Israeli military said the airport had been "a central hub for the Houthi terrorist regime to transfer weapons and operatives".

Mohammed al-Bukhaiti,

a member of the Houthi political bureau, told pro-Iran Al-Mayadeen broadcaster that the movement would hit back.

"Our military operation in areas of Gaza will continue and will not stop," he said. "Wait for the Yemeni response."

The Houthis have been firing at Israel and at shipping in the Red Sea since Israel began its military offensive against Hamas in Gaza after the Palestinian militant group's deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. The Houthis say they are doing so in solidarity with the Palestinians and have pressed on with attacks in response to Israel expanding its military operations in the Gaza Strip.

Washington: President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada



Mark Carney and Donald Trump at the Oval Office on Tuesday. (Reuters)

Some places not for sale: Carney

University blamed for 'mismanagement'

Harvard not eligible for grants: US

MICHAEL C. BENDER AND ALAN BLINDER

Washington: President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada

praised each other in the Oval Office during the first meeting between the two leaders since Carney won a stunning election on an anti-Trump platform.

That decision was relayed

in a contentious letter to Alan M. Garber, the president of Harvard, from Linda McMahon, the education secretary, who blasted the school for "dismal mismanagement."

"Trump struck a conciliatory tone, saying he had 'a lot of respect' for Carney, who praised the President for his 'relentless focus on the American worker'." But after Trump talked about his calls for Canada to be the 51st state, Carney said "some places are not for sale".

Trump did not concede: "Next year, we're going to do well."

"I just want to congratulate you," Trump told Carney on his election win as they met in front of reporters. "Ran a really great race. I watched the debate. I thought you were excellent."

As the two countries struggle over a trade war sparked by Trump's tariff

trials, the US President gave a

full display of a unique mix of gruffness and a sense of show. Shortly before Carney's arrival, Trump said on social media that the US didn't need "ANYTHING" from its northern neighbour, a contrast to his public warmth in the Oval Office.

"I very much want to work with him, but he cannot understand one simple TRUTH — Why is America subsidizing Canada by \$20B? That's a year in addition to giving them FREE Military Protection, and many other things?"

"We don't need their Cars, we don't need their Energy, we don't need their Lumber, we don't need ANYTHING they have, other than their friendship, which hopefully we will always have."

Trump's claim defies the economic data as the US depends on oil produced in Canada, in addition to an array of other goods that cross border trade have helped to make more affordable.

New York Times News Service and AP

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An AI image shows Donald Trump as the pope, wearing a white cassock and papal headdress, after it was posted on the US President's Truth Social media account. (@realDonaldTrump via Reuters)

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"Harvard will continue

Maharashtra poll deadline

R. BALAJI

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Maharashtra state election commission (SEC) to complete polls to 376 local bodies within four months.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N. Kirtiwar Singh asked the SEC to issue the necessary notification within four weeks, adding that the elections would be based on the reservation policy that existed before the 2022 report submitted by the Election Commission, headed by former chief secretary Jayant Kumar Bantha.

It said the outcome of the elections would be subject to the apex court's decision on pending petitions challenging the commission's report that had recommended 27 per cent reservation for the OBCs.

Following multiple peti-

tions against the 27 per cent OBC quota recommended by the Bantha panel, the apex court held in 2017 restrained the SEC from holding the local body polls until the top court examined the validity of the recommendations.

Since then, elections to gram panchayats, zilla parishad and other local bodies have not been held in the state.

When the matter came up for consideration on Tuesday, the bench said bureaucrats concerned with the petitioners, agreed with the court's view that bureaucrats were running the municipalities and elections would facilitate the return of the political leadership.

Jaising pointed out that if the Bantha commission report was accepted, it would result in the denotification of 34,000 posts.

The bench said it was only concerned with the conduct of the polls. It said disputes regarding the inclusion or exclusion of people in or from the list of candidates might not be a major issue as the affected persons could always contest the next polls.

"After all, it is an election for a particular tenure," the bench observed.

occupying all the municipal corporations and panchayats and are taking major policy decisions. Because of all this litigation, a democratic process has been stalled. Officials have no accountability."

Solicitor-general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Maharashtra government, and senior advocate Indira Jaising, representing some of the petitioners, agreed with the court's view that bureaucrats were running the municipalities and elections would facilitate the return of the political leadership.

FIR query on student suicides

R. BALAJI

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought directions from authorities on whether FIRs had been registered in connection with the alleged suicides of students at IIT Kharagpur and NEET Kota.

A bench of Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice R. Madhavdeva passed the direction to examine whether its March 24 judgment laying down a law making registration of FIRs mandatory in all suicide or suspicious death cases of students in higher educational institutions had been complied with.

The bench on Tuesday passed the directive while dealing with the compliance of a directive issued by the court with regard to the directive of the bench to the Union government to deposit a sum of ₹20 lakh as an outlay for the initial operations of the national task force constituted by the top court on March 24. It is to be headed by Justice Ravindra Bhat, a former judge of the Supreme Court, and is mandated to identify the causes for such suicides, particularly in higher educational institutions like IITs and IIMs.

"We take this opportunity to take notice of two more unfortunate incidents of suicide as reported in the apex court that a student aged 22 studying in IIT Kharagpur was found hanging in his room on 4-5-2025... An NEET aspirant committed suicide by hanging herself from an iron grill of her room in Parshavnath ahead of the National Medical Entrants Examination, which was scheduled on Sunday, i.e., 11-5-2025," the court said.

SC judges' assets

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday night had ordered an investigation of assets owned by the Chief Justice of India and 20 other judges, consistent with its efforts to ensure greater transparency.

The apex court has 33 judges. The Supreme Court has also decided to put in the public domain the process relating to the appointment of judges to the apex court and the high courts.

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Exigency drill

FROM PAGE 1

This is the first such large-scale exercise in Bengal since the 1971 India-Pakistan war, according to officials.

Departments, including fire and emergency services, civil defence and disaster management, health and home, will participate in the coordinated drills at over 30 "strategic points" across the 17 districts.

"The details of the mock drill will be sent to the districts by Tuesday evening. The Centre has identified the categorised districts and the state will now decide on the strategic locations where the exercise will be held. More than 30 strategic locations have been identified for the drill so far," said a senior state official.

During a video conference held by Union home secretary Govind Mohan, the state was briefed on the strategy required to deal with Bengal chief secretary Manoj Paul, home secretary Nandini Chakraborty and civil defence secretary Rajesh Sinha attended the meeting.

"In the prevailing situation, the state has been described as sensitive by the Centre... The state has been asked to assess the preparedness to deal with any emergency and also check the coordination between the departments that deal with crisis," said a senior government official, adding that common people would not be involved initially.

Asked what kind of exercise would be conducted during the civil defence mock drill in Bengal, a bureaucrat said everyone would be trained in a building collapse. The drill will also assess how fast the fire tenders are pressed into service during a fire or how quickly the injured are shifted to hospitals during a crisis.

Streets installed in various parts of the state must be kept ready so that people can be alerted during an air strike.

"There are 95 stations in Calcutta and about 20-25 stations in each district. These sirens would be checked to ascertain if they are functional. Primary reports suggest that a major-

ity of the sirens, mostly in Calcutta, were widely used during World War II when Japanese aircraft dropped bombs in the city. However, they were not used after the 1971 war and are not in working condition," said an official.

He added that in the aftermath of Cyclone Aila's devastation, the state government installed over 300 sirens in 2012 in the disaster-prone parts of Bengal.

The official said that Kolkata Police had issued an urgent message across police stations to collect information about the existing sirens in their jurisdictions.

A list of sirens has to be collated for repair for use during the mock drills, a senior officer at the police headquarters said on Tuesday. Sources said the use of sirens in the city and district headquarters was discussed at length at the meeting convened by the Union home secretary.

The state was also asked to keep satellite phones ready so that the communication system does not collapse under any circumstances.

"The state has 60-odd satellite phones, which are used during emergencies such as cyclones and other natural calamities, and all are functional," he said.

A senior official said that the existing control room of the disaster management department at Nabanna would act as the main contact point with the air force. The air force will send messages to the control room to alert it in case of a possible air strike, and it would be passed down to similar facilities in the districts.

Through the districts have been shortlisted for the mock drill, senior government officials were surprised to find border districts such as North 24-Parganas, South 24-Parganas and Nadia not included.

"These districts share borders with Bangladesh and have a large population. These districts are very sensitive, given that they are close to Calcutta and the present situation in Bangladesh...," said a senior state official.

Additional reporting by Kousik Basu and Monalisa Chaudhuri

Mamata in Murshidabad damage-control mode, but lapses remain

New subdivision for violence hub

SNEHAMOY CHAKRABORTY AND ALAMGIR HOSSAIN

Calcutta/Samsanganj: Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday announced a new subdivision comprising the Suti, Farakka and Samsanganj blocks of Murshidabad.

She also kept senior party leaders from the area away from the meeting with victims of the recent riot that claimed three lives and disrupted the livelihoods of hundreds.

A source said both actions by the chief minister during her maiden visit to Murshidabad since the April riots sent a clear message: she was

unhappy with the handling of the situation by both her administration and party.

"Announcing a new subdivision for the violence-hit area confirmed she was unhappy with the failure of the police in managing the riot. Keeping local leaders, including the MLA and MP, away from the meeting with victims clearly showed her dissatisfaction with their performance," said a senior TMC leader in Calcutta.

Mamata, during an administrative meeting in Suti, said a new subdivision would be formed comprising Farakka, Dhulan and Suti. I expect this will be completed within one to one-and-a-half months. The new office will be set up

Mamata Banerjee addresses a rally at Suti's K.D. Vidyalaya in Murshidabad on Tuesday. Picture by Samim Aktar

at a central location for easy access from all three blocks. You no longer have to travel long distances," Mamata said.

A source said if the new subdivision office is set up in a central location, it will most likely be Dhulan.

A senior police officer stated the announcement indirectly acknowledged police failure. The police have been accused of failing to provide security and failing due to poor planning. Before Mamata's visit, the chief of the Jangipur police district, Ananda Roy, was transferred.

A source said during Mamata's meeting with victims, Kalpana Mondal, a

woman from riot-hit Betbona village, requested a permanent BSF camp. Mamata did not respond.

There were accusations that her party leaders failed to prevent the riot despite the area being home to four TMC lawmakers — Jangipur MP Khalilur Rahaman, Samsanganj MLA Amitur Islam, Farakka MLA Manirul Islam and Sagaridighi MLA Babuon Biswas.

MP Rahaman and MLA Amitur Islam were not allowed to take part in her meeting with victims at the Samsanganj BDO office on Tuesday. She also did not interact with local leaders at the helpdesk.

CM skips key riot-hit areas

SUBHASISH CHAUDHURI AND ALAMGIR HOSSAIN

Calcutta/Samsanganj: Mamata Banerjee has urged the people of riot-hit Samsanganj in Murshidabad district not to get ensnared by provocation from the saffron camp and other forces that allegedly seek to foment tension and spread hatred.

During her first public meeting in Murshidabad on Tuesday, following last month's communal violence, the chief minister asserted that she would rather be beaten than tolerate division.

"This is my humble request to you. I am always there to guide you, watch over you, and maybe to some I am beneath the carpet, which is a matter of pride. My request to you is that please do not get instigated by heading the BJP, other religious organisations, or fundamentalists, do not allow the creation of division among yourselves," Mamata said at a state government event in Suti, where she inaugurated or laid foundation stones for 167 projects in Murshidabad worth ₹713 crore.

"I would rather have my head severed from my body. I prefer that to witnessing division. I will be happy with that, but I do not wish to see any

them multiple forms of assistance. In addition to cheques for ₹1.20 lakh for each of 236 families.

The Trinamool Congress dispensation has been under fire for its alleged failure to avert violence and vandalism in pockets of Murshidabad that affected hundreds of families, claimed at least three lives and injured dozens in April, in the wake of protests against the CAA.

"I do not have anything new to say about waaf... do not insist. There is no question of that here. If you must protest, go to Delhi (as it is a central law). There is no problem in Bengal, because I am here. Hindu property, Muslim property, Sikh property, Christian property... I will not have any taken away," she said.

"They have not stayed by the Supreme Court and is now sub judice. Do not confuse, if you do, I will be your biggest enemy," she added.

"Did they not try to snatch rights through NRC-NPR? Did we or did we not hit the streets? Let me think it over and make a decision."

The chief minister said she would not stand by anybody who participated in riots and asked the people to remain as vigilant as the administration on outsiders, to identify the "enemies".

Riots... I am against all riots," she added.

"The people do not carry out riots, but outsiders who are brought to the state in a pre-planned way to engineer riots. You get trapped. Do not do so."

Before the event, Mamata went with senior administrative officials to Dhulan and met 400 strife-singed families. Her government gave

and the CM chose to ignore people like us," he said.

Three persons —

Harabindra Das, Chandan Das and Ejaz Ahmed were killed in alleged police firing on May 1. About 15 others suffered bullet wounds. Around 40 police personnel were injured, many homes were set ablaze and shops vandalised. Betbona, Jafrajab and Hitalala villages, and two wards of Dhulan municipality were badly scarred.

Administrative sources avoided taking Mamata to Betbona or Jafrajab for fear of provoking a riot. She was not invited to the alleged inaction of cops and the suspected role of some TMC leaders in the violence.

BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari alleged Mamata wasn't kept away by security concerns, but was boycotted by victims, which the administration "realised". "The police tried hard to convince people to attend Mamata's meetings, but they were told to hold rally in Salt Lake during a demonstration by riot victims for his mother. 'I'm paralysed

Built Das, a homemaker in Jafrajab, one of the worst-hit villages, said: "Her visit made no difference to us. She came by helicopter and left the same way."

Built's grievance found an echo in Dhulan resident Golam Malmuddin, shot in the legs while out to buy medicine for his mother. "I'm paralysed

and I can't move," he said.

He was told to hold rally in Salt Lake during a demonstration by riot victims for his mother. "I'm paralysed

Govt to plant 100 neem trees in Digha

OUR BUREAU

Samsanganj/Bhubaneswar: Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said that her administration would plant 100 neem trees on the premises of the Jagannath temple in Digha to ensure there was no encroachment of the wood, which is mandatory to carry icons of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Suhadrada.

Mamata's statement came in the backdrop of the recent allegation that leftover neem wood from Puri's 12th-century Jagannath Dham had been used to carve the idols placed at the Digha shrine.

"Why will I steal? There is no scarcity of neem trees in Bengal. There are forests and trees in many too. There are 500 trees planted on the Jagannath Dham premises. We will plant 100 more neem trees there," said Mamata as her administrative meeting in Suti, Murshidabad district.

Odisha chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday said Mamata Banerjee's statement was "ridiculous". "The letter read: '...The name 'Jagannath Dham' holds a unique and sacrosanct identity linked to Puri, and its usage in reference to any other temple or location is an affront to the sentiments and emotions of millions of pilgrims, devotees, and the general public, besides diluting the distinct heritage of Shree Jagannath Dham, Puri.'

Majhi further said: "In view of this, I request the Government of West Bengal to reconsider the usage of the name 'Jagannath Dham' in relation to the Jagannath temple recently established in Jafrajab. I demand using the term 'Jagannath Dham' in its official naming, communication, and promotional materials."

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INDICES

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Smallcap	46834.91	11148.7	
NIFTY	24379.60	-81.55	
Next 50	63824.90	-2.42	
Nifty 500	21956.60	-238.55	

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 M&M 3058 1760.21
 HDFC Bank 1928 1688.44
 Airtel 1896 1633.19

*In ₹, #in crs

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Pure	97500	+3100
Hallmark	93100	+3100
Silver (kg in ₹)		
Bar	96300	+2050
Portion	96450	+2050
Crude*	5020	+9
Copper#	851	-0.05

*per barrel in ₹; #per kg in ₹

MONEY MARKET

Yield (%)	
Call rate	4.95-6.00
91-day T-Bill	6.02
1-year Gilt	6.04
5-year Gilt	6.17
10-year Gilt	6.44

IN BRIEF
Services sector sector system up

■ NEW DELHI: India's service sector activity accelerated slightly in April, largely driven by a quicker increase in new order inflows, which also underpinned a faster expansion in employment, a monthly survey said on Tuesday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index reached 58.7 in April, up from 58.5 in March, indicating a sharp and stronger expansion in service sector output. The headline figure was above its long-run average of 54.2. PTI

BoB numbers

■ NEW DELHI: Shares of Bank of Baroda (BoB) on Tuesday tumbled nearly 11 per cent after the company's March quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. State-owned Bank of Baroda on Tuesday reported a 1.3 per cent rise in net profit at ₹5,404 crore in the March quarter of FY25. The lender had earned a net profit of ₹4,886 crore in the year-ago period. PTI

Moody's on growth

■ NEW DELHI: Moody's Ratings on Tuesday cut India's GDP growth projections for 2025 to 6.3 per cent from 6.5 per cent, saying economies globally will see a slowdown on account of heightened US policy uncertainty and trade restrictions. PTI

Sumitomo close to Yes Bank deal

Calcutta: Government-owned Union Bank on Tuesday said it is probing lapses in the procurement of books titled 'India@100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse' written by former International Monetary Fund (IMF) executive director K.V. Subramanian and valued at ₹7,25 crore.

Notably, the bank's probe comes at a time the government of India has terminated the services of Subramanian, six months ahead of his three-year tenure.

"The bank has made the said procurement. However, there were certain lapses in

the procurement, which are being examined by the bank,"

Union Bank has said in a stock exchange filing on Tuesday. At ₹118.35, the bank's shares were down 6.18 per cent on the Bombay Stock Exchange.

The exchange filing came after it was reported that Union Bank ordered the copies of the book for distribution through the bank's zonal and regional offices as part of its centenary-linked initiatives to promote economic awareness.

However, the book's purchase has raised concerns over its necessity and the use of public money.

The decision of the government-owned bank drew flak from the Congress, with the party claiming the govern-

ment procured the book.

Calcutta: India has reached a historic milestone, having signed a trade pact with the United Kingdom on Tuesday after tariff tussle sparked by US President Donald Trump forced the two sides to hasten efforts to increase their trade in whisky, cars and food.

The deal, between the world's fifth and sixth-largest economies, has been concluded after three years of stop-start negotiations and aims to increase two-way trade by a further ₹25.5 billion (₹94 billion) by 2040 with liberal market access and eased trade restrictions.

Under the deal, 99 per cent of Indian exports will benefit from zero duty access to the UK market, opening up opportunities for labour intensive sectors such as textile, marine products, leather, footwear, sports goods, toys and gems and jewellery.

In India, connoisseurs of

Scotch whisky and gin may see the price of their coveted brands falling significantly as from 2024, with tariffs falling to 150 per cent to 75 per cent before reducing to 40 per cent by the deal's 10th year. Automotive tariffs will also go from over 100 per cent to 10 per cent under a quota.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the development as "landmark" and "mutually beneficial".

"In a historic milestone, India and the UK have fully concluded an ambitious and mutually beneficial free trade agreement, along with a double convention agreement," adding that it would catalyse trade, investment, growth, job creation and innovation.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said, "Today we have agreed on a landmark deal with India — one of the fastest growing economies in the world, which will grow the

economy and deliver for British people and business."

The two leaders had a phone call where Modi invited Sunak to India. The FTA will now go through the process of legal text formalisation to be

approved by the British Parliament before it comes into force.

The deal will allow more British firms to compete for contracts in India, and enable Indian workers to travel to Britain for work, without

some of Trump's tariffs that have upended the global trade

system, and the resulting turmoil sharpened focus in both London and New Delhi on the need to launch a UK-India trade deal. It also marks Britain's most significant trade deal since it left the European Union in 2020.

Stop-start negotiations

After two years of negotiations, the deal was signed on Tuesday, marking the 10th anniversary of the UK's exit from the European Union.

Both countries are also seeking bilateral deals with the United States to remove some of Trump's tariffs that have upended the global trade

system and the resulting

turmoil sharpened focus in both

London and New Delhi on the

need to launch a UK-India trade deal. It also marks Britain's most significant trade deal since it left the European Union in 2020.

Systematic approach

Modi said that the deal will be "systematic" and "comprehensive".

"We will work together to implement the deal in a systematic and sequential manner," he said.

India and the UK have been

working together on various

issues, including climate

change, energy transition and

digital transformation,"

Modi said.

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GOOD MORNING

EVENTS

■ The Rhoona art society presents Parikrama, a journey of 15 years with a bouquet of painting, sculpture and photography, Academy of Fine Arts, noon to 8pm. (Till May 8)

HS results today

■ CALCUTTA: The results of the state higher secondary exams will be out on May 7. The HS council said last week that the results can be viewed on and downloaded from its official websites after 2pm on Wednesday. Some of the websites are: <https://results.digilocker.gov.in>; www.indiaresults.com; www.results.shiksha.com; <https://wb.12apbte.com>; <http://result.net/wbchseapp.com> and www.jsterrun.in.

Spam detection

■ CALCUTTA: A telecom service provider has introduced a feature where businesses can display their brand name on the recipient's mobile screen in an outgoing call. This will help people tell genuine calls from spam, the service provider said. The service, "business name display", has been launched by Airtel.

Wall collapse

■ TALLAH: Four people were injured after portions of the boundary wall of a godown in Tallah caved in on Tuesday. The injured were treated and discharged from RG Kar hospital, police said.

Madhyamik 2026

■ CALCUTTA: The state secondary education board has announced that next year's Madhyamik will start on February 2. The exams on first languages, second languages, history, geography, mathematics, physical science, life science and optional elective subjects will be held on February 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12, respectively. In May 2026, the board said the dates of physical education, social service and work education will be announced later.

WEATHER

YESTERDAY	
Maximum:	34.5°C (-1.2)
Minimum:	27.7°C (+0.9)
RAINFALL: NIL	
HUMIDITY: Max:	88%
Min:	54%
THE FORECAST	
Maximum	26°C
Minimum	35°C
EXPECTED:	Partly cloudy sky
SUNSET	6.06pm
SUNRISE	5.01am

'ASSIMILATION' TO BE UNDER SUPERVISION OF AUTHORITIES

IIT to bring back student bonding programme

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

Kharagpur: IIT Kharagpur has decided to reintroduce its assimilation programme to improve bonding among students following the spate of deaths on the campus.

The assimilation programme, which used to last for three days, will bring new students to academic and campus life and help them get acquainted with the institution's culture and resources. Senior students help juniors get acquainted.

The IIT authorities had stopped the programme in June 2023, after the family of Faizan Ahmed, a

HC halts axe on rooftop hangouts for 2 weeks

DEBRAJ MITRA AND TAPAS GHOSH



A rooftop pub in central Calcutta and (below) in south Calcutta. Pictures by Bishwanup Dutta



lishments," the official said.

Key points from the order

Justice Gaurang Kanth's order, uploaded to the court website on Tuesday evening, made several significant observations.

The central question is whether emergency action under Section 400(8) of the KMC Act is warranted, most restaurants with rooftop sections are expected to follow the same guidelines.

A senior state government official confirmed that the KMC will halt demolitions of all similar establishments. "A few restaurants have moved the court. But, in principle, the case affects all rooftop estab-

lishments," the official said.

to prevent imminent injury

■ The discretion to determine which provision applies being solely to the competent authority, deemed to be an expert body.

■ Section 400(3) requires a "grave emergency" opinion that the unauthorized structure poses an imminent threat to life or property.

■ This court is conscious of the fact that the invocation of Section 400(1) and Section 400(8) serve distinct legal purposes. Section 400(1) generally addresses construction violations, while Section 400(8) should be invoked only when immediate action is necessary

■ The respondent authority (KMC) appears to have pursued demolition after failing

to prevent imminent injury

■ The discretion to determine which provision applies being solely to the competent authority, deemed to be an expert body

■ Section 400(3) requires a "grave emergency" opinion that the unauthorized structure poses an imminent threat to life or property.

■ This court is conscious of the fact that the invocation of Section 400(1) and Section 400(8) serve distinct legal purposes. Section 400(1) generally addresses construction violations, while Section 400(8) should be invoked only when immediate action is necessary

to prevent unauthorised construction and activity. As a statutory authority, it (KMC) must act reasonably, follow statutory guidelines, and avoid arbitrary application of the law.

■ The court has directed the KMC to review all documentation and reach a fresh decision on whether Section 400(8) should be invoked.

■ Only if the KMC determines that a "grave emergency" exists may they proceed with demolition. Otherwise, affected establishments must be given a hearing opportunity first.

■ The aforesaid steps shall be taken within a month and completed expeditiously, but in any event, not later than two weeks from the date of communication of this order.

■ In the interim, the impugned notice under Section 401 of the KMC Act shall remain in abeyance till the respondent takes a final decision.

■ The petitioners are restrained from carrying out any action whatsoever at the disputed site.

The petitioners' counsel, Joydip Kar, argued that the establishments in question possessed all necessary permits.

This ruling follows recent demolitions at LMNOQ, a rooftop establishment at Cellar Park on Park Street, which occurred after a chief minister Mamata Banerjee's surprise visit raised fire safety concerns. Her inspection came in the wake of a devastating fire at Rituraj Hotel in Burrabazar that claimed 14 lives on the night of April 29.

Justice Kanth had previously stayed LMNOQ's demolition until Thursday, the next hearing, and asked the KMC to provide legal justification for their actions.



Segregation possible: Panel review plea in SC

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

Calcutta: The Bengal school service commission has concluded its review petition before the Supreme Court that when it was possible to segregate the tainted candidates, it was done, while the court ordered the cancellation of the entire selection process.

The review petition says, "the commission's consistent stand before the High Court and before this court is that the segregation of tainted from untainted in respect of the entire selection lot is possible."

The SSC has attached a claim in the petition detailing how the tainted can be segregated from the untainted.

The commission identified 1,804 teachers as tainted and barred them from returning to school.

"The apex court must take cognisance of the fact that the SSC could segregate the candidates based on the evidence it has. Therefore, the decision to cancel the entire panel may be reconsidered while adjudicating on the review petition," said an official of the education department.

The petition has gone through the text of the review petition.

In it, the SSC has said the en masse termination of

teaching and non-teaching jobs has landed the school education system in trouble and handed an advantage to "privately unaided schools leading to exploitation".

The petition says: "The order passed on 17.04.2025... is premised with the fact itself which was violated with the court ordering the cancellation of the entire selection process."

It says, "Further, systematically it has not been judicially established. The CBI investigation is ongoing and merely the chargesheets came to be filed and no convictions have been recorded. The court's finding of or otherwise based on unproven allegations, contrary to the principle of presumption of innocence."

The SSC has challenged the Supreme Court's April 3 order in which the court said appointing school staff after the "expiry of the panel" was one of the tools of illegality.

"It is submitted that there was a good reason to justify the expiry of the panel and thereby because appointments were made after the expiry of the date of the panel, such appointments cannot be said to be illegal and contrary to rules."

SSC chairperson Siddhartha Majumdar declined to comment.

KMC mulls joint scan on outlets

SUBHAJOY ROY

we will conduct hearings on our own or if there should be joint hearings where officials from the excise and fire departments will be present. Some establishments might have some deficiencies that excise or fire brigade can spot. A joint hearing could be an ideal platform to discuss them," said a senior KMC official.

A joint inspection should ideally precede the hearings because we should have full knowledge of the status of the establishments, what their deficiencies are and what needs to be done to address them.

Justice Gaurang Kanth's order on Tuesday said the court "deems it appropriate to remand the matter to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) for reverification of the relevant documents, facts, and figures."

It said: "Upon such reverification, KMC will act and when a fresh decision is to be taken as to whether the invocation of Section 400(8) of the KMC Act is warranted."

The section empowers the KMC officials to inspect the outlets for fire safety rules by sending notices to the respective owners.

"We have to plan whether

bars and cafes had approached the civic body with a sanctioned building plan.

"We have checked our records and did find out that any of these rooftop establishments were issued a sanctioned building plan. Neither has anyone approached us with a valid building plan. If they come to us with a sanctioned building plan, we will examine it," said a senior KMC official.

Civic officials, however, said some of the restaurants and bars located on lower floors violated rules by protruding structures on the fire refuge. They had extended their restaurants to the fire refuge of the floor.

The KMC officials have insisted over the past few days that neither a trade licence nor payment of property tax validated an illegal structure. They said only if the structure had a sanctioned building plan, it would be considered legal.

Till Tuesday evening, none of the rooftop restaurants, bars and cafes had approached the civic body with a sanctioned building plan.

"We have checked our records and did find out that any of these rooftop establishments were issued a sanctioned building plan. Neither has anyone approached us with a valid building plan. If they come to us with a sanctioned building plan, we will examine it," said a senior KMC official.

"However, the certificate states that all other statutory requirements must be met."

Property tax is collected because of civic services — like water and drainage infrastructure — used by the building.

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that one of our clients intends to purchase a Plot No. 14, 1st Floor, containing an area of 1181 sq. ft. approximately at Holding No. 105, Deshpur Samsa Road, Village No. 18, P.S. & Dist. Howrah from its existing owners.

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Any person having any objection to the sale may intimate his/her claim, demand or objection in writing together with supporting documents to the undersigned.

EXPIRATION: 30th June, 2025.

MOOD MATTERS

The war drums have, unfortunately, been sounded in both India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the terrorist strike in Pahalgam. But the beats seem to differ a bit. In India, the media has been the principal warmonger, drumming up public sentiment in favour of an aggressive response. The story in Pakistan, evidently, is more complicated because there seems to be a discernible gap between the political and the public responses to the possibility of conflict. Pakistan's Establishment — the military leadership, especially the hawkish army chief, Asim Munir, along with the civilian government — has adhered to predictable, thunderous rhetoric. But the civilian reaction, unlike that in 2019 when there was a military escalation between the two nations, has been circumspect. Two principal reasons are being cited to explain this phenomenon. The first pertains to Pakistan's economy. High inflation and joblessness are matters consuming the *aam aadmi* in Pakistan. That the economy is being helped to breathe by largesse from the International Monetary Fund must be weighing on the minds of Pakistan's civilian constituency. In fact, Moody's latest prediction about prolonged tensions with India being injurious to Pakistan's limping economy is likely to sullen the public mood further. The second, and equally important, factor concerns a slight shift in the compact between Rawalpindi and ordinary Pakistanis. Pakistan's army undoubtedly commands public fealty. But there are also signs of stress, especially after the ouster of Imran Khan — a favourite of the man of the street — by the army. That Mr Munir is Mr Khan's chief adversary in the corridors of power has added to the complications in the ties between the military and the people of Pakistan. These developments in Pakistan merit an enquiry: could economic distress and a weakened democracy function as anti-war devices?

New Delhi must take note of this state of public disaffection with the powers that be in its recalcitrant neighbour. A full-scale conflict could make Pakistan stand behind the civil-military apparatus. Perhaps there is wisdom in India utilising the sombre public mood in Pakistan to its advantage; leveraging it to bring pressure on Pakistan's deep State that facilitates cross-border terrorism could be one option that can be looked into. Piling further economic pressure on its beleaguered economy, as opposed to a full-blown conflict, in conjunction with a reasoned strategic response is the need of the hour.

WAR AND PEACE

Interference in academic matters has almost become commonplace in Indian universities. At a meeting of the Standing Committee on Academic Matters of Delhi University, the chairperson objected to the inclusion of the Kashmir issue and the Israel-Palestine conflict as case studies in the section named the 'Psychology of Peace' in the proposed psychology syllabus. The case studies were part of the chapter on conflict and conflict resolution. The chairperson said that the Kashmir issue had been 'resolved' — this, despite the recent bloodshed in Pahalgam — and there was no need for lessons on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The logic is elusive. The aim of the section was to help students understand the concepts of peace, its need, peace process and its psychology. If the Kashmir issue was already resolved, then there could be nothing better for students to understand the process. The subject of the Israel-Palestine conflict, historical as well as current, would be enormously helpful in exploring the psychology of conflict and the failure of peace processes. But the chairperson's reason to excise it was that it was unnecessary. Evidently he does not mind if students remain ignorant of the world they live in. His objections have been criticised as politically motivated and as ideological interference in academic matters. More so, because he said that students should learn from ancient Indian texts such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Gita* to gain an indigenous perspective on peace.

The chairperson's intervention raises an issue that is independent of his point of view. Would ancient texts be more illuminating than current or recent events in understanding conflict, its resolution, and the psychology of peace? Certainly, the ancient story of a conflict that could have been avoided might be useful given that the social arrangements, reasons for the conflict, and efforts at peace were unlike those in present times. There is no harm in a plurality of perspectives. But present or recent conflicts and their resolution — when that happens — are more meaningful because they are contemporary; they are familiar contentions of ethnicity, ideology or territorial aggression set in a world of known social dispensations, modern ideas and thinking processes, recognisable fears and forms of resistance. Both perspectives can be included for a full understanding, excluding specific case studies to satisfy ideological inclinations is an assault on academic autonomy and a harmful narrowing of academic vision.

SCRIPPSI

'The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains.'

KARL MARX

Why should anyone continue being Left?

Beacon of hope

PRABHAT PATNAIK

The Soviet Union has collapsed; whether China remains socialist has become a matter for research. The question, therefore, arises: why should anyone, other than a person with a religious streak, continue being Left and believing in a socialist future for mankind? This question would indeed have been quite clinching if the recent decline of the Left had been accompanied by a flourishing of capitalism; that would have proved that the Left's decline was based on a fundamental flaw in its theoretical understanding.

The world today, however, is characterised by a capitalism that is afflicted not just by a massive economic crisis and political repression but it is also actually presiding over a genocide on a scale unprecedented in living memory. The only liveable future one can visualise for mankind today is a socialist future whose arrival may be painful and delayed but is essential for escaping from the theoretical understanding.

The economic crisis is obvious. From the finding by the American economist, Joseph Stiglitz, that the real wage of an average male American worker in 2011 was marginally lower than that in 1968 to the overwhelming evidence of an increase in nutritional deprivation in India and in much of the Global South between 1993-94 and 2011-12, it is clear that even the heyday of neoliberal capitalism had seen a process of absolute universalisation of the working people everywhere; the slowdown in the world economy following the collapse of the US housing 'bubble', which has now morphed into a secular stagnation, and mounting unemployment has made matters far worse for them.

The Keynesian prescription of a rise in State expenditure to counter sluggish demand does not work under neoliberal capitalism. State expenditure can increase employment only if it is financed either by a larger fiscal deficit or by larger taxes on the rich; taxing the working people and using the tax proceeds for the State's expenditure do not increase aggregate demand since the working people consume much of their incomes anyway.

Both ways of financing larger State expenditure are anathema for finance capital. Since finance today is globalised while States remain nation-states, the latter must defer to the wishes of the former to avoid debilitating capital flights. This rules out the Keynesian remedy for countering stagnation: it makes the nation-states powerless to overrule the market.

More so, there is a strong neo-fascist upsurge all over the world that is supported by monopoly capital. It provides a diversionary discourse so that the hegemony of monopoly capital faces no threat from the ongoing crisis. In India, this

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alliance between neo-fascism and monopoly capital has taken the form of a corporate-Hindutva alliance.

The neo-fascist discourse shifts attention from the prevailing economic distress of the working people and focuses instead on the 'Other', against whom it generates hatred within the majority; this has the added 'advantage' from the point of view of monopoly capital of disrupting the unity of the working people and preventing any collective action on their part against its hegemony. At present, capitalism, therefore, has brought both economic distress for the people and political repression that are unprecedented at least over the last half-century. Moreover, there is no possibility of a return to the days of offshoring under neoliberal capitalism: the same constraints that prevent State intervention for overcoming the crisis within a liberal bourgeois dispensation also apply when the State is headed by neo-fascists for globalised finance capital's opposition to fiscal deficits or taxes on the rich does not disappear when the State is headed by neo-fascists.

Donald Trump's resort to higher tariffs must be seen in this context. Since demand cannot be increased through State-dependent foreign intervention, the only way to increase demand is by snatching it away from other countries by pursuing what is called 'beggar-thy-neighbour' policies. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, before the fascist governments in Japan and Germany had expanded demand by increasing military expenditure and financing it by massive fiscal deficits (they could do this because finance capital was not globalised but *national* and could be cajoled into accepting larger

fiscal deficits), there had been a spate of 'beggar-thy-neighbour' policies through competitive exchange rate depreciations following the collapse of the Gold Standard.

Trump has started a similar 'beggar-thy-neighbour' policy, this time as the weapon. The success of such a policy for any particular country depends upon whether other countries retaliate; if they do, then all countries become even worse off collectively than they were before the spate of competitive 'beggar-thy-neighbour' policies began. In the present case, countries of the Global South are likely to be brow-beaten into eschewing retaliation, even bringing *down* their own tariffs in exchange for the Americans not raising theirs, with the result that the working people in the Global South, especially farmers in a country like India, destroy food security, and expose these countries to the danger of famines; Africa, where foodgrain self-sufficiency was abandoned earlier, provides a classic example of this.

While the economic distress and political repression unleashed by contemporary capitalism are evident, some may object to my including the Gaza genocide among the crimes of capitalism. How does capitalism then work? The answer is that it works *harm* to the environment, accept their argument, ignoring the unanimous support that Benjamin Netanyahu is getting from big capitalist powers and the obvious plan of imperialism to use Israel as its *garde me* in the Middle-east. Even then, it is undeniable that the Left everywhere is the most consistent force standing up for the Palestinians. Its historical role for mankind's survival and for the preservation of sanity is unquestionable.

What the male gaze desires

SREEDEEP BHATTACHARYA

The male gaze has existed since time immemorial. But the advent of the camera and print technology made that gaze penetrative and pervasive. The invention and the dissemination of these two technologies, which facilitated the reproduction of images, accelerated the objectification of the female body. Other forms of technological mediation from video to virtual reality have further advanced the conversion of flesh into flesh.

Gaze is not just an act of looking; the term connotes inequality of power. The male gaze conceives the woman as an object of desire and pleasure, to be denied or to be denied again. The market not only facilitates such an objectification but also normalises its access and naturalises its excess across media platforms. The fragmented female body, disassociated from her persona, thus becomes a popular global commodity.

But the desirable female body must conform to certain standards pertaining to size, weight, height and skin colour. An entire regime of exercise, diet, grooming, cosmetics, supervision, surgery aims to make the body dazzling before it is put on display to lure attention. Patriarchal capitalism has convinced us of the importance of gazing at the 'idealised' body. Any other body type is useless for the mass production and the mass consumption of the desirable body.

It is imperative for this patriarchal fiction to project men as being in charge as chasers and women as being passive recipients. The pornography industry is the epitome of patriarchy's imagination and creativity. It produces the most blatant displays of male lust. Bodies, intimacy, sexuality — everything is thoroughly disembodied and disjoined within the pornographic gaze. Implicit and apparent in this position and display is the question of power. Who has the power to control and display women's bodies, to what extent, and for whom? These are not ethical questions concerning

modesty, its social acceptability, or its aesthetic rendering. These queries are about the possession, projection and production of women's bodies to cater to the male gaze, to male validation; it is about a process that degrades the dignity of women and turns them into subjects of objectification.

Objectification need not be confined to visuality only. Social practices such as teasing and coercion can be deployed towards the submissiveness of women in a bid to valorise the idea of male conquest. If she is too eager, then she can be subjected to moral judgement. In case she resists, the resistance should be broken through undue ad-



vances. If she still acts unwillingly, then she has to be taught a lesson. Consequently, in this celebration of machismo and male pride, there is no concern.

There is no dearth of the patriarchal valorisation of men as being in charge as chasers and women as being passive recipients. The pornography industry is the epitome of patriarchy's imagination and creativity. It produces the most blatant displays of male lust. Bodies, intimacy, sexuality — everything is thoroughly disembodied and disjoined within the pornographic gaze. Implicit and apparent in this position and display is the question of power. Who has the power to control and display women's bodies, to what extent, and for whom? These are not ethical questions concerning

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Shared resource

■ Sir — While all eyes are on India and Pakistan and the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, another contest over the sharing of water is brewing within the country. The escalating dispute between Punjab and Haryana over water allocation is the new *Boi-chitra* (Beas Management Board) is alarming. While Punjab's concerns regarding its depleted aquifers are valid, physical obstruction of Central infrastructure undermines the rule of law. Both states must exhibit statesmanship and restraint. Provoking public sentiment on such an emotive issue is risky.

The Centre should act as a neutral arbiter, addressing the historical grievances do not overshadow present responsibilities. River waters are not political trophies but life-giving resources that must be managed with wisdom, fairness, and cooperation, not brinkmanship.

Satyajit Mallick,
Siliguri

■ Sir — It is deeply concerning to witness the resurgence of hostilities between Punjab and Haryana over river water distribution. History offers grim warnings: the Dhamer Yudh Morcha and subsequent insurrections had devastating consequences. Reckoning tensions through aggressive actions and emotive rhetoric risks destabilising a sensitive border state. The BBNB must remain impartial and act prudently, should adhere to established norms. The people deserve leadership that seeks equita-



Not so hidden

■ Sir — Everything — from art galleries to trendy cafes — is a 'hidden' commodity to social media users. The question that needs to be asked here, though, is this: who is it hidden from? Youngsters who have clearly spent most of their lives in their homes surfing the internet seem to think every *parar chôpô* or *dokan*, which does brisk business, is a hidden gem because they have little exposure to the outside world. Places like Cafe, Sangu Valley, and Dilkhuza are hardly hidden from Calcuttans. The same goes for places like Boi-chitra Gallery and Golpark's second-hand book stalls. Generations of people visit these places. Rather than being hidden gems, these places are an inseparable part of the city's life. Young people should enjoy them without their phone cameras.

Ashok Kumar Kar,
Calcutta

ble and lasting solutions, not performative gestures. Water security can only be achieved through unity and scientific planning, not by repeating the mistakes of past decades.

Priyanshi Dash,
Barpeta, Odisha

■ Sir — The ongoing dispute between Punjab and Haryana has become a political spectacle, overshadowing

regional one-upmanship. The BBMB and the Centre must ensure that justice prevails without inciting further divisions.

Tousif Rahaman,
South 24 Parganas

■ Sir — As the BBMB dispute intensifies, it is essential for the Centre to remain firm and impartial. Perceptions of favouritism, whether justified or not, could inflame tensions and compromise the credibility of federal governance. It is crucial that the Central government facilitates respectful dialogue between Punjab and Haryana while reinforcing that the state has the right to act unilaterally over natural resources. Water sharing must be governed by law, not sentiment. Silence or bias at this juncture could erode public trust in national institutions.

Mashillah Qasmi Pakahi,
Lucknow

■ Sir — It is disheartening to see political parties in Punjab and Haryana using the water-sharing issue to fan

the plight of farmers on both sides. Agriculture, the backbone of both states, is already reeling from water scarcity, rising input costs, and climate uncertainty. Turning a resource crisis into a political battleground benefits no one. Authorities must prioritise data-driven decision-making and open dialogue. Farmers deserve access to water based on need not historical animosities or



Sharing is caring

regional sentiments. With Punjab facing severe groundwater depletion and Haryana needing its rightful share, the path forward lies in scientific assessment, fair allocation, and cooperative federalism. Politicians must resist exploiting public emotion for short-term gain.

Amir Zaman,
Meghalaya

Historic mistake

■ Sir — The proposal to reopen the Alcatraz prison as a symbol of 'law and order' is deeply troubling. Such a gesture revives memories of harsh, punitive measures and authoritarian ideals rather than addressing modern issues. Alcatraz, with its grim legacy, should remain a historical site, reminding society of past excesses. The focus ought to be on rehabilitation and humane incarceration. Restoring a notorious prison for political theatre reflects poorly on democratic values. The justice system deserves progressive policies rooted in evidence. But the president of the United States of America, Donald Trump, does not understand this.

Bal Govind,
Noida

■ Sir — Alcatraz was closed for sound reasons: exorbitant costs, severe conditions, and an outdated penal philosophy. Revising such a failed model suggests a retreat from more enlightened justice approaches. Public resources should be better allocated towards improving rehabilitation, addressing root causes of crime, and reforming overcrowded prison systems. Romanticising a facility once known as 'Devil's Island' signals a shift towards performative governance rather than meaningful policy. History has taught valuable lessons; reopening Alcatraz would be an act of historical amnesia, not strength.

Mohammad Asad,
Mumbai

Travel in style

■ Sir — The recent viral video of four impeccably-be



Stylish traveller

haved cats travelling with remarkable grace and precision, training can achieve. In an age when air travel often brings tales of stress and disruption, this feline quartet provided a refreshing example of calm companionship.

M. Jayaram,
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

Letters should be sent to:
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**THE TIP**

To build a strong team, develop a regular ritual such as a daily tea break, a weekly lunch or after-work drinks

The Telegraph

WELLNESS

CALCUTTA WEDNESDAY 7 MAY 2025

STRIKE THREE

New research says 17 overlapping factors affect risk of stroke, dementia and late-life depression. **Nina Agrawal** on lifestyle changes to lower risk

Although they may appear unrelated, those who have dementia, depression or who experience a stroke often end up having one or both of the other conditions too, said Dr Sanjula Singh, a principal investigator at the Brain Care Labs at Massachusetts General Hospital, US, and the lead author of the study. That's because they may share underlying damage to small blood vessels in the brain, experts said.

Some of the risk factors common to the three brain diseases, including high blood pressure and diabetes, appear to cause this kind of damage. Research suggests that at least 60 per cent of strokes, 40 per cent of dementia cases and 35 per cent of late-life depression can't be prevented or slowed by controlling risk factors.

"Those are striking numbers," said Dr Stephanie Collier, director of education in the division of geriatric psychiatry at McLean Hospital in Massachusetts, US. "If you can really optimise the lifestyle pieces of the modifiable pieces, then you're at such a high risk that you can prevent it without disability."

Often, the risk factors for these diseases are interconnected, and addressing one — for example, getting more exercise by going for routine walks with a friend — can also help you address others, like excess weight and social isolation.

"If you're starting to work on one of them, very often you're actually improving multiple at the same time," Dr Singh said. "That's a great way to start."

Protective Factors

The study, which looked

at data from 59 meta-anal-



SMART MOVE: Tasks such as reading, solving puzzles or playing chess protect against brain diseases

Factors That Increase Risk

The study also identified 13 health characteristics and habits that make you more likely to develop dementia, a stroke or late-life depression. (Altogether, the protective and harmful factors add up to 19 factors because two of them, diet and social connections, can increase or decrease risk, depending on their quality.)

- Low to moderate alcohol intake (consuming one to three drinks a day had a smaller benefit than consuming less than one drink a day)
- Cognitive activity, meaning regular engaging in mentally stimulating tasks such as reading or doing puzzles or playing chess
- A diet high in vegetables, fruit, dairy, fish and nuts
- Moderate or high levels of physical activity
- A sense of purpose in life
- An active social life and a large social network

These behaviours for brain health might feel overwhelming. But Dr Singh suggested treating the list like a menu of options:

- Sleep disturbances (for example, insomnia or poor sleep quality) or sleep periods longer than eight hours
- Smoking history
- Pain, particularly forms that interfere with activity
- Loneliness or isolation
- General stress or stressful life events (as reported by study subjects)
- High blood pressure
- High body mass index
- High blood sugar
- High total cholesterol
- Depressive symptoms
- A diet high in red meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, sweets and sodium

Trying to tackle all of

these behaviours for brain health might feel overwhelming. But Dr Singh suggested treating the list like a menu of options: "Choose just a first risk factor and then take it step by step," she said.

Where to Begin

The study also identified which specific risk factors and protective habits have a particularly notable effect on brain health. Addressing those, doctors said, is a great place to start.

The study initially looked at risk factors linked to two or more of the three conditions. It did not prove that these risk factors directly cause the diseases — all it showed was an association.

The study found that high blood pressure was the greatest individual

risk factor for developing any of the three diseases, in large part because it nearly triples the risk of stroke. The doctor might start by lowering salt intake, exercising more or losing weight, said Dr Alison Moore, chief of the division of geriatrics, gerontology and palliative care at the University of California San Diego in the US. But those interventions aren't always enough, she said, especially as we age and our blood vessels stiffen. That's when medication can help.

■ Flex your physical and mental muscles. Bonus points if it is with friends.

Moderate and high physical activity substantially decreased the chances of stroke and dementia, as did having a large social network. Still, Dr Collier said the data reaffirms her advice to patients to perform in mental tasks that are "a little bit difficult" — such as reading, doing puzzles or learning a new instrument. Ideally, she said, you'd do those activities with some body else, because conversation can be cognitively stimulating and because you get the added benefit of social interaction.

■ Start early if you can. It's never too late or the right time to start making lifestyle changes "is generally not older age, it's middle age." That can prevent even early disease from developing.

But taking steps to reduce these risk factors can help prevent or slow the progression of disease later in life, too. It can also benefit patients who have a family history or genetic predisposition to these diseases, who "often feel like it's their inevitable fate", Dr Singh said. But "there are things they can do — we all can do — to take better care of their brains."

NYTN

Why mother's milk is best for baby



YOUR HEALTH

DR GITI MATHAI

Human babies need nurturing from the time they are born until they are able to feed for themselves.

For the first six months of life the best food for the baby is mother's milk. Many infant formula manufacturers have tried to duplicate breast milk, but they have not yet been successful.

All animals have different digestive systems and nutritional requirements. Breast milk is ideally formulated for digestion by human babies. (Cow's milk is best for the calf). Human milk provides all the baby's requirements. In addition to energy, it contains immunoglobulins from the mother. This protects the baby against infectious diseases to which the mother has already been exposed or has received immunisation.

Human females are born with two breasts. These start to develop during puberty and become functional during pregnancy. Hormones are released during pregnancy which makes the breast grow and start functioning.

In the first few days after birth the milk is called colostrum. It provides easily digestible nutrition and immunoglobulins to prevent disease. Within a few days, this becomes proper milk which is released as per demand under the influence of hormones.

Milk production is a "letdown" reflex, so as the baby suckles and stimulates the nipple, milk is constantly produced. Milk may also be produced on the side from which the baby is not feeding, causing some leakage. When the baby stops feeding, the milk production stops as the letdown reflex ceases. The milk does not stay in the breast for a long time. If you are feeding for a few hours, the milk will not spoil.

Milk can be expressed from the breast and stored outside. It can be kept at room temperature for four

hours, refrigerated for four days and frozen for four months. This expressed milk can be warmed and fed to the baby as required.

Sometimes, the woman feels that the breast milk is not adequate because when she expresses the milk, she feels that a sufficient amount is not available. It is enough if the baby sleeps for two to three hours after feeding and passes adequate amounts of urine.

A tablet called metoclopramide is sometimes prescribed twice a day 10 minutes before food to establish and increase lactation. A simple natural way to do this is to drink a glass of water before feeding the baby and then another glass as soon as you finish. Also, eat an adequate, nutritious diet. Still, if you feel the baby is not fed up at the 45° angle so that both of you are comfortable. The room should not be too hot or cold. It should be quiet and peaceful. If the mother is under a lot of stress, enough milk may not be produced.

Milk is the only food that the baby requires for six months or 180 days. After that, if the mother is weaning foods can be introduced. Breast milk can be continued for one or two years. Breastfeeding may produce amenorrhoea (absence of menstruation) but it does not inhibit ovulation, so you can become pregnant while breastfeeding.

Sometimes milk is produced in a non-pregnant woman or even in a man. This is a condition called galactorrhoea. It needs investigations with blood tests and scans.

This milk secretion may occur under the influence of hormones secreted by the pituitary gland like prolactin or thyroid stimulating hormone. Medications such as anti-psychotics, anti-depressants or even anti-acidity drugs can increase prolactin levels and produce milk. Continuous irritation of the breast by tight clothing or renal failure can also cause lactation.

Breast milk is a living, dynamic substance, uniquely designed to nourish and protect babies during their most vulnerable stage of life. You must ensure that the baby gets it for optimal growth.

The writer has a family practice at Vellore and is the author of *Staying Healthy in Modern India*. If you have any questions on health issues please write to yourhealthgm@yahoo.co.in

RISES IN THE EAST



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STAR WATCH

2022: Quinton de Kock scores his third half-century of the season, as Lucknow Super Giants trample Kolkata Knight Riders in Pune by 75 runs, the biggest victory margin in terms of runs in the edition

KICK OFF WITH The Telegraph

SPORT

ENRIQUE WARNS PSG OF ARSENAL FIGHTBACK P14



XXCE

CALCUTTA WEDNESDAY 7 MAY 2025

IN BRIEF

Vatican visit on cards

■ ROMA: Three-time Rome champion Iga Swiatek and USA's Coco Gauff have said they will head down to the Vatican, joining the crowds in St Peter's Square, if they get the chance while preparing for the Italian Open just up the road. "I'm notatholic, but I do go because I feel like it's an historic thing," Gauff, the 2023 US Open champion, said on Tuesday. "With the whole smoke thing, I thought that was cool. I would like to go and see it and be around it since we're here." During the conclave, ballots are burned and black smoke from the Sistine chimney means no decision; white smoke signals the cardinals have chosen a pope. The conclave starts on Wednesday and the Italian Open lasts through May 18.

Wild cards

■ ORLANDO: Iva Jovic, a 17-year-old, and Emilija Nava, a 23-year-old, claimed their first Open wild-card invitations from the US Tennis Association on Monday by finishing atop the standings based on points earned at tournaments across five weeks. AP

Tri-series

■ COLOMBO: India will be eager to bounce back from their loss and confirm their spot in the final when they face a struggling South African side in the women's Tri-series here on Wednesday. PTI

Titans stun Mumbai in last-ball thriller



Jasprit Bumrah celebrates after dismissing Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill in the rain-affected match at the Wankhede on Tuesday. The Titans, however, pulled off a three-wicket win with the target reduced to 147 in 19 overs due to rain. (Reuters)

OUR BUREAU

Gujarat Titans pulled off a thrilling three-wicket victory against Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede on Tuesday. The hosts thus suffered their first loss after six matches.

The Titans' DLS target was revised to 147 and they knocked off the required 15 runs in the 19th over following a rain break. Rahul Tewatia remained unbeaten on 11 off eight balls as victory was achieved in the last over.

The Titans had everything in their control before the first rain interruption. They were steadily progressing towards the target of 156 while keeping the DLS equation in mind.

They were 107/2 after 14 overs with Shubman Gill and Suresh Rutherford in control when rain took the players off the ground. When they returned, Bumrah delivered the knockout blow by removing Gill.

One-man show

Bumrah yet again showed why he is considered the best across formats. His first two overs produced just six runs

IPL STANDINGS

	P	W	L	NR	NRR	PI
GT	11	8	3	0	+0.793	16
MI	11	8	3	0	+0.482	16
RR	11	7	3	1	+0.376	15
MI	12	7	5	0	+1.156	14
DC	11	6	4	1	+0.362	13
KKR	11	5	5	1	+0.249	11
LGL	11	5	6	0	-0.469	10
SRH	11	3	7	1	-1.192	7
RR	12	3	9	0	-0.718	6
CSK	11	2	9	0	-1.117	4

Updated till Tuesday's match.

mar Yadv and Will Jacks that they managed to put on a decent score.

The five-time champions lost six wickets in the last 9.3 overs for just 58 runs.

Rashid effort

Coming into this match, there had been a lot of talk about Rashid Khan's bowling. On Tuesday, he bounced back with a four-over spell of 1/21, providing a glimpse into his best.

Not just Rashid, the Titans' bowlers were at their best. Prashid Krishna stuck to his hard lengths and Sashikumar kept the good work going.

MUMBAI INDIANS

R. Sutherland	c Sudharsan b Siraj	2
S. Gill	c Sudharsan b Rashid	58
S. Yadav	c Shahrukh b Khan	7
T. Natarajan	c Bishnu Coetzee	1
S. Chahal	c Gill b Rashid	27
N. Dhir	run out	6
C. Beach	not out	1
G. Khem	not out	1
K. Sharma	not out	1
Extras: (b6, w4)		7
Run outs:		1
Total: 156 (20 overs)		156
Fall of wickets: 1/2, 2/26, 3/97, 4/103, 5/106, 6/113, 7/123, 8/150, 9/159, 10/160, 11/161, 12/162, 13/163, 14/164, 15/165, 16/166, 17/167, 18/168, 19/169, 20/170		
Extras: 10 (1w)		
Wickets: 10 (3-71, Kishan 4-32, Rashid 4-31, Coetzee 2-0-10)		

Updated till Tuesday's match.

and he then came back to remove Gill after the rain break.

The ball pitched outside the off stump and nipped back sharply to knock off Gill's stumps.

The Titans captain was set for a big score having done the hard work but was then hurried into his stroke, the ball nipped into the gap before ricocheting into the stumps.

The dismissal gave Mumbai a huge boost and Bumrah returned to dismiss Shahrukh Khan in his next over. The ball was back of a length and slanted into his stumps to leave Shahrukh clueless.

Ashwini Kumar and Trent Boult also benefited from Bumrah's exploits at the other end.

Batting collapse

Mumbai earlier huffed and puffed their way to 155/8 following a failure by their openers and a middle-order collapse at the Wankhede.

It was mainly due to a 71-run third-wicket partnership off 43 balls between Suryakumar and Shubman Gill.

MATCH-METER

MI	GT
56/2 Powerplay	29/1
5 Sixes	5
14 Fours	12
45 Dots bowled	47
2 30+ score	2

GT won by 3 wickets (DLS method)

Man of the Match: Shubman Gill

KNIGHT RIDERS COUNT ON CONFIDENCE

Coach upbeat about crack at playoffs

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta: Kolkata Knight Riders head coach Chandrankant Pandit acknowledged that his team is gradually peaking, with two wins on the trot keeping them in the race for the playoffs. Pandit is "very, very confident" of the Knight Riders making the playoffs.

Speaking on the eve of the Knights' clash against Chennai Super Kings at Eden Gardens on Tuesday, Pandit said, "Looking at our last two games, yes, of course, we're peaking... but that is what the beauty of this tournament is."

"We've always been saying that in the dressing room that this is a family which has to carry on with this two-month-long journey. And you will find the ups and downs in there."

The team's previous win to come out of a low phase and counter-attack is more important to us. So, looking back at the last two games, yes, we are getting that confidence."

"We were confident enough right through. It was just that the results were not in our favour. But having won the last two, we're looking ahead to winning the remaining games as well. I am very, very confident that we'll qualify."

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Kolkata Knight Riders' (from left) Varun Chakravarthy, Harshit Rana and captain Ajinkya Rahane at Eden Gardens on Tuesday. Pictures by Sunat Kumar Sinha

Relaxed but not content, hosts ready to fight

SAYAK BANERJEE

Calcutta: The light-hearted moments head coach Chandrankant Pandit had planned to make CSK captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni bring the customary Eden bell before the start of Wednesday's game. But that won't be possible.

Pandit's sombre expression in the dugout — especially, after the Knight Riders failed to chase down 112 against Punjab Kings, and were then outplayed at home by the Gujarat Titans — has been replaced by a much more relaxed look. All thanks to the defending champions' back-to-back wins over Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan Royals, which have helped them stay in the playoffs race.

The Knights' Job, though, is a tough one. They still have three more matches to win, with the first against the already-eliminated Chennai Super Kings on Wednesday.

Considering how they have been playing lately, it's a game the Knights are expected to win. But on their part, they need to cut down the unforced errors as much as possible in all three facets of the game.

To speak of their batting, the group performed collectively in the last two games as the Knights breached 200 on both occasions. But with the ball, especially against the Royals last Sunday, the performance wasn't something to be proud of, as a batters' line-up, led by Pandit, had the opportunity to fight back despite the score being reduced to 71/5.

So, will the Knights tweak their bowling attack for Wednesday's clash? South African quick Anrich Nortje had an extended session

HAWK EYE	
LAST 5 HEAD-TO-HEAD	
KKR	CSK
3	2
31 May 2025: KKR won by 8 wickets	

ed to win. But on their part, they need to cut down the unforced errors as much as possible in all three facets of the game.

The Knights, during Tuesday's training, had the "Shahrukh Khan" logo on the back of their practice jerseys to honour women displaying bravery, resilience and determination in adversity. One expects them to play with similar courage and boldness even if put under pressure by the Super Kings.

TODAY'S MATCH

■ Kolkata Knight Riders vs Chennai Super Kings, 7.30pm, Eden Gardens, live on Star Sports Network & JioHotstar

names like Suryakumar Yadav, Ajinkya Rahane and Suresh Raina as icon players.

Coach's clarification

■ HYDERABAD: Sunrisers Hyderabad's ultra-aggressive batting approach has backfired this season. Head coach Daniel Vettori said that his team had been "very aggressive" every time the batters went out to bat, saying the plan was to assess the conditions and play accordingly, but unfortunately, the home pitches suited the rivals more. The third season of the league, featuring eight teams, will be held at the Wankhede from May 26 to June 8. The league involves big

Our Bureau & PTI

Constant scrutiny made it 'tough' for Kohli to lead

OUR BUREAU

Calcutta: The constant pressure of leading India and RCB for nearly a decade and the relentless scrutiny around his batting "became too much in the end" for Virat Kohli and he stepped down to be in a "happy space".

Kohli resigned as T20 captain after the World Cup in 2021, following which he also relinquished RCB leadership roles. In his final seasons later, he "stepped down to be in a happy space".

"At one point, it did become tough for me because there was just too much happening in my career. I was captaining India for a period of 7-8 years. I captained RCB for nine years. There were expectations on me from a batting perspective every game that I played," Kohli said on an 'RCB



Virat Kohli during this IPL. (Reuters)

Bold Ditties postscript:

"I didn't like this season that the attention was off me. If it wasn't captaincy, I would be batting. I was exposed to it 24x7. It did get very tough on me, and it did get too much in the end."

"That's why I stepped down because I felt like if I've decided I want to be in this place, I need to be happy."

"I need to have a space in

my life where I can just come and play my cricket without being judged, without being looked at as what are you going to do this season and what's going to happen now," said Kohli.

"In the last couple of seasons, I have consciously made an effort to evolve my game," he said. "And I've seen the results of it. Again, to the point where I had to let go of people wanting to see me, this is what I am, and just go and hit the ball."

"I start from wanting to hit the ball and then you go through this whole journey of becoming someone. Expectations, this and that, to a point where you feel like this is actually pulling me back. And you have to push and again get to the point where you say, just hit the ball."

are sitting in the commentary box for 25 years and feel that Indian cricket is their personal platform. Indian cricket is no one's personal property and it belongs to 140 crore Indians," he stated.

"These people have raised questions about my coaching, concussions (when he left the 2011 tour of England after a head injury), distribution of Champions Trophy prize money... I don't owe any one of them an explanation as to whether I have given (prize) money or not... Those living in glass houses shouldn't throw stones at others," Gambhir said.

With the support staff, following the example of his predecessor Rahul Dravid who had shared the windfall with the support staff after India's T20 World Cup win.

Gautam Gambhir India head coach

Mutual respect

Gambhir also cleared the air about his relationship with senior players Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, dismissing any differences with them.

"A coach's job isn't selecting the team. It is the job of selectors to select... Till the time they (Rohit and Kohli) are performing, they should be a part of the team. When you start and when you end, it is your individual decision," Gambhir said.

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Xaverian 5-a-side meet

OUR BUREAU

Calcutta: Eight corporate-backed franchise teams will take part in the second edition of the Xaverian Soccer League, organised by St Xavier's College Alumni Association in collaboration with the department of sports, St Xavier's College (Autonomous).

Will held on Saturday and Sunday at the college ground. The league, first started in 2024, has swiftly become one of the city's most anticipated youth football events.

Each squad features a carefully curated mix of players—one marquee player, one guest player, three current students and three alumni players resulting in a vibrant, inter-generational five-a-side football format.

The marquee players are Bahim Neh (Sharp Shooters), Mehtab Hussain (Cred Accelerate), Ashim Biswas (Xaverian Tigers), Md Rafique (BTL Blasters), Deepak Mondal (Levitans), Deepankar Roy (Warriors), Denson Devdas (Digital Strikers) and Alivito D'Cunha (LION Lions).

"XSL reflects our commitment to football, supported by blending academics with sports and camaraderie. It's heartening to see students, alumni, and sports personalities come together in this collaboration," said principal Father Dominic Satio, St Xavier's College (Autonomous), Calcutta.

Footballer dead

Buenos Aires: Former Argentina defender Luis Galvan, a member of the team that won the 1978 World Cup, died on Monday at the age of 77, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) said.

Galvan also represented Argentina at the 1982 World Cup in Spain, earning a total 34 caps for the national team. He retired from the international game in 1983.

Reuters



Crystal Palace's Eberechi Eze (extreme right) converts a penalty against Nottingham Forest at Selhurst Park in London on Monday. (Reuters)

Forest suffer setback

PREMIER LEAGUE

PALACE	1
FOREST	1

London: Nottingham Forest's quest for a Champions League berth next season suffered a setback when they were held to a 1-1 draw by Crystal Palace in a Premier League match on Monday.

Murillo cancelled out Eberechi Eze's penalty for the home side.

The draw leaves Forest in sixth place in the table on 61 points from 35 games, two points behind fifth-placed Chelsea in the final Champions League qualification position.

Mid-table Palace took the

lead at Selhurst Park when Eze converted a penalty on the hour mark after Forest goalkeeper Matz Sels had felled Tyrick Mitchell. Eze also hit the post.

The lead lasted four minutes before Nuno Williams' shot was deflected into the Palace net by defender Murillo, who limped off shortly afterwards with a hamstring injury that could see him miss Forest's run-in to the end of the campaign.

"It was a game of two halves," Forest manager Nuno Espirito Santo told Sports.

"In the first half we controlled the game. In the second, we started good but then Palace reacted. It was good for us that we achieved the goal so

soon after Palace scored.

"The final games (of the season) are going to be like this, nervous games, tight games. Everybody is fighting for something. It is up to us to read."

Palace have still not beaten Forest in the top division since 1991 but stepped closer to their Premier League record points of 49.

They have 46 with three games to play.

"We had quite a few chances at the end," Eze said.

"I thought we were going to take it, but I think a point, we'll take it. We're positive, we know we put in a good performance."

It took almost 35 minutes for Palace to have the first ef-

fort on goal when Daniel Mwanga's volley from 10 yards was well saved by Sels.

Palace were awarded a penalty in the 60th minute when Sels was felled by an out-stretched leg for what looked like a clear penalty. However, it was confirmed only after a VAR confirmation.

Eze, who missed a spot-kick at Newcastle last month, swept the ball into the left corner, just past the outstretched arm of Sels.

Forest were soon level though. The corner was cleared to Williams on the edge of the box and his low shot was intentionally deflected into the net by Murillo.

Reuters

AC Milan keep hopes alive

Genoa (Italy): AC Milan scored twice in two minutes to beat Genoa 2-1 in Serie A on Monday and keep alive their slim hopes of a place in next year's Champions League.

Genoa substitute Vittinha

scored a minute after taking the field to give his side the lead after 61 minutes.

But Rafael Leao levelled 15 minutes later with his first shot after being deflected into the box and two minutes later Genoa captain Morten Frendrup put one into his own net.

Although Milan remained

in ninth place, they closed the gap on the top four to six points. Juventus are fourth, equal on points with Roma and Lazio below it. Three rounds remain.

LEAGUE ROUND-UP

Milan's last three games are against Bologna, Roma and bottom club Monza.

Genoa have lost their last

three games and sit at 13th.

Respite for Girona

Girona won for the first time

in 12 league games, 1-0 against Mallorca and eased their La Liga relegation fears on Monday. Christian Stuani got the all-important goal in the 10th minute when he pounced on a rebound and lashed home.

It was the 33-year-old striker's 139th goal for the club since joining from Midtjylland in 2017.

The result left Girona six points clear of the relegation zone with four matches remaining. Mallorca stayed at ninth.

AP, Reuters

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Dembele fit, coach wants an encore of last week's heroics vs Gunners

Paris: Paris Saint-Germain received a boost ahead of Wednesday's Champions League semi-final second leg against Arsenal with Ousmane Dembele passed fit as the French champions look to turn growing squad cohesion into a place in the final.

Dembele, who scored the only goal in last week's 1-0 win at the Emirates Stadium, picked up a muscle injury during that match but will be available at the Parc des Princes.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

"He has been training with the squad for two days, so he is available for tomorrow (Wednesday). I have to be my disposal," PSG coach Luis Enrique told a press conference on Tuesday.

It is welcome news for a PSG side whose progress this season has been built less on individual brilliance and more on the kind of collective spirit and tactical maturity that has often eluded them in past European campaigns.

PSG's defender Achraf Hakimi said the team's new-found identity had been key to their run.

"The key is to show our personality with and without the ball and press high," Hakimi said. "Arsenal will need to feel that the Parc des Princes is our home."

"Ousmane is a different kind of player. He makes you want to go and watch the game in the stadium, he can change the course of a match at any moment, he's a genius with the ball. We're delighted to have him back."



Arsenal's Ethan Nwani with Raheem Sterling and teammates during training in London on Tuesday. (Reuters)

Luis Enrique, brought in to overhaul a team once shaped around marquee stars, has made no secret of his mission to build a unit capable of competing at the highest level.

"This season we've grown so much as a team," he said. "You have to be ready for any scenario and pay attention from start to finish. The target for the coming years is to keep improving the process," he said when asked about last season's semi-final loss to Borussia Dortmund.

That steady evolution was evident in the first leg in London where PSG's compact shape, aggressive pressing and controlled possession frustrated Arsenal's attacking rhythm.

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PSG's only Champions League final appearance ended in defeat by Bayern Munich in 2020, while Arsenal's sole final was in 2006 when they lost to Barcelona in Paris.

"We will have to be good



Paris Saint Germain's Ousmane Dembele during training in Poissy, France, on Tuesday. (Reuters)

as last week, but while many expect the same kind of game, I guarantee you it will be completely different," said Luis Enrique.

According to Uefa statistics, PSG have won 19 of the 19 ties in which they won a first leg away, while Arsenal have never overtaken a home first leg defeat in European competition, losing all five ties.

Enrique, however, isn't counting on history ahead of the match at the Parc des Princes on Wednesday.

"We're bound to suffer because our opponents don't have a favourable result," Enrique told reporters.

"We need to match our per-

formance as closely as possible in the first leg to win the return leg and stay true to our idea."

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta, on the other hand, believes that his team needs to be ready to ete their life to reach the Champions League final.

"Excitement, goosebumps, wanting the day to arrive, (the feeling) of being very prepared, very convinced and knowing that the opportunity is to play in a Champions (League) final," Arteta was quoted as saying by ESPN.

"And when you get to that point, you have to give your life for it."

STATS THE WAY

Head to head:
Matches played: 6, PSG have won 1, Arsenal 2.

Three have ended in draws.

■ Only two teams have reached the Champions League final after losing the first-leg semi-final at home. Ajax beat Panathinaikos in 1995-96 and Tottenham defeated Ajax in 2018-19.

■ Both PSG and Arsenal are bidding to reach their second Champions League final. The French side made it to the final in 2019-20 and the Gunners in 2005-06.

■ After winning the first leg of a European tie away from home, PSG have been eliminated only once (vs Manchester United in 2018-19). Arsenal have never progressed after losing the first leg at home.

■ This is PSG's fifth Champions League semi-final (win 1, loss 3) and a fourth in six seasons. In 2023-24 they lost 0-1 both away and at home against Borussia Dortmund.

■ This is Arsenal's third Champions League semi-final. They beat Villarreal 1-0 on aggregate in 2005-06 but lost 1-4 against Manchester United three seasons later.

Source: Uefa

Paris Saint Germain's Ousmane Dembele during training in Poissy, France, on Tuesday. (Reuters)

Arsenal will be happy with the return of midfielders Thomas Partey after he missed the first leg through suspension.

For the first leg, such was the shortage of players that Arteta had to name four academy players on the bench. Arsenal still gave PSG a tough fight.

With inputs from Reuters, AP

OTHER RESULTS

● Paris Saint Germain vs Arsenal (12.30am IST Thursday, Live on Sony Ten 2 and Sony LIV)

First leg score: PSG 1 Arsenal 0

France minister apologises: France's former interior minister Gerald Darmanin has apologised to Liverpool fans for wrongly blaming them for the chaos at the Stade de France during the 2022 Champions League final in Paris.

Darmanin, now serving as the justice minister, admitted

that security arrangements for the final between Liverpool and Real Madrid were inadequate, and that his previous public remarks blaming English fans was a mistake, British media reported on Monday.

Fans were caught in dangerous crowd congestion out-

side the Stade de France before the match, which was delayed for over 30 minutes.

French police were filmed using tear gas on the fans, who complained of heavy-handed treatment as they were herded into pens outside the stadium.

Reuters

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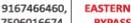
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The Telegraph

Wednesday
7 May 2025



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TECH**GOOGLE'S NOTEBOOKLM APP IS COMING TO ANDROID AND iOS**

Google's plan to put Gemini in every one of its products is happening at a rapid pace. One AI product that many are looking forward to is NotebookLM, which helps parse documents, videos and more using Google's advanced AI models. It has been available on the web since 2023, but Google recently said it would get an Android app, which is available for pre-install.

NotebookLM aims to help students, professionals, and researchers better understand complex information through features like smart summaries and the ability to ask questions about documents and other materials. It even lets you generate AI podcasts, called Audio Overviews, to make it easier to digest complex topics.

At the moment, NotebookLM exists on a website. You can visit it on your phone, but the interface is not user-friendly compared to the desktop version. The mobile app will change that. The app is expected to be released at Google I/O in late May but you can pre-register to be notified when the download is live.

NotebookLM banks on the same technology as Google's other chatbots and AI projects, but instead of a general purpose robot, NotebookLM is focused on documents you upload. It can assimilate text files, websites, and videos, including multiple files and source types for a single agent. There is a context window of 500,000 tokens and supports document uploads as large as 200MB. Google says this creates a queryable "AI expert" that can answer detailed questions and discuss ideas based on the source data.

According to screenshots on the app listings, the dedicated app will allow users to create new notebooks and view the ones they have already created. They can also upload new sources from their device and view the ones they have already uploaded in each of the notebooks.

Besides mobile, the apps will be available on iPads and tablets, where you'll have a bigger screen to multitask.

Mathures Paul

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APPLE VISION PRO GETS ITS FIRST FEATURE FILM WITH BONO TAKING THE STAGE

Apple Vision Pro, the spatial computing headset, is getting its first full-length immersive film — *Bono: Stories of Surrender*, a concert-style "documentary event". But wipe those tears, it will also be available on Apple TV+.

Based on his memoir, it uses 180-degree video capture in 8K resolution, aiming to create a detailed visual experience. Apple's Spatial Audio technology is also used, making sounds appear to come from specific points around the listener to increase the feeling that you are there during the performance.

The film has been in the making for sometime. During the pandemic, Bono spent time with U2 member The Edge, reworking and re-recording a catalogue of the band's greatest hits for an album titled *Songs of Surrender*, which was released in March 2023. The 40-track LP was accompanied by a documentary titled *Bono & The Edge: A Sort of Homecoming*, as well as Bono's memoir, *Surrender: 40 Songs, One Story*.

The singer continues his journey in *Bono: Stories of Surrender*. The Apple documentary, directed in black-and-white by Andrew Dominik and it will have its world premiere at Cannes Film Festival later this month.

Apple has said in a statement: "[Bono] pulls back the curtain on a remarkable



life and the family, friends, and faith that have challenged and sustained him, revealing personal stories about his journey as a son, father, husband, activist and rockstar. Along with never-before-seen, exclusive footage from the Beacon Theatre shows, the film features Bono performing many of the iconic U2 songs that have shaped his life and legacy."

Bono: Stories of Surrender will arrive on Apple TV+ on May 30 and simultaneously be available in Apple Immersive Video for Vision Pro users. An abridged and updated edition of Bono's memoir will be released in conjunction with the documentary.

Mathures Paul

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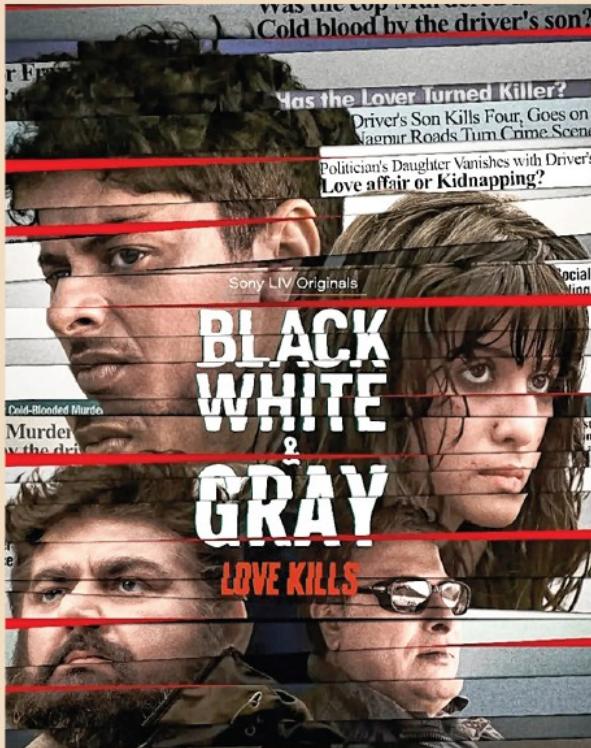
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HAPPY GUESTS

BLACK WHITE & GRAY IS AVANT-GARDE AND WILDLY ORIGINAL

Dizzying inventiveness — both of the literal and metaphorical variety — is at the heart of *Black White & Gray*. Distinguished by a daring meta-narrative which turns the so-called tenets of the true-crime genre on its head, this six-part SonyLIV series is perhaps the most ingenious piece of writing seen on Indian screens in a while.

Co-created by Pushkar Mahabal and Hemal Thakkar, with the former also doubling as director, *Black White & Gray* — with the title delving into the good, the evil and, more importantly, the in-between — focuses on the classic poor boy-rich girl trope, but builds a storytelling technique around it that keeps you on the edge of your seat. There are two intertwined strands: a mockumentary about a crime that is supposed to be real, and the restaging of the crime. Both are fictional, but what hits hard is that all of it could well be true.

The boy (played by Mayur More) and the girl (Palak Jaiswal) are not named, which is just as well because their circumstances — though extraordinary — are not alien to frequent newspaper



Black White & Gray is streaming on SonyLIV

headlines. Not naming them says more about socio-economic politics and caste chasm than doing so would have, with *Black White & Gray* emerging as a sharp and on-point commentary on what divides India today.

Living in Nagpur, she is the daughter of a powerful politician, while he is the son of the driver who has been driving her father around for decades. It is a prickly situation and what kicks off as a midnight no-strings-attached romp in a hotel room quickly escalates into a multiple murder case. The boy is the accused, including being named as the killer of the girl (no spoiler, there is much more to this). His other 'victims' include a village boy, a cab driver and an off-duty cop (played by actor-filmmaker Tigmanshu Dhulia). Hot on his heels is a bounty hunter (Deven Bhojani), along with a police force, which at the behest of the politician, is baying for the boy's blood.

The stakes rise with every twist and turn and so does your involvement in the narrative, with the format shifting between the dramatisation of the crime(s), which is, of course, fictional; the talking heads playback, which is

also fictional, marking a significant departure from a true-crime documentary, and the employment of multiple unreliable narrators, each of which has different interpretations and reinterpretations of what happened over the course of a few nights.

Black White & Gray talks about confirmation bias, gender inequity and the abuse of power. Much of it is not on the nose, but what is crudely executed — which is exactly what the script demanded — is the role of a certain section of the media as hungry vultures, perpetually ready as it is to peddle lies and manipulate many a truth. The fact that the boy chooses to tell his side of the story to a foreign YouTuber/self-styled journalist — who he believes is the only one who will present his story without blemish — says a lot about the kind of faith we have on our media now.

Black White & Gray ends on a tenuous note that makes you instantly rethink all that you have watched — and believed — in the last three hours. That's the mark of great storytelling.

Priyanka Roy

t2 CAUGHT UP WITH MAYUR MORE AND PALAK JAISWAL, THE LEAD PAIR OF *BLACK WHITE & GRAY*, FOR A CHAT

More than the story, what was your reaction when you were told about the format of *Black White & Gray*?

Palak Jaiswal: It is a mockumentary of sorts and that hooked me. Also, the screenplay is written in such a way that a lot of events happen at the same time, but it never feels like chaos. The episodes are mounted in such a compelling manner that you can't help but go from one to the next, often finishing the series in one setting.

When I read the script for the first time, my mind was blown because nothing that I expected was happening... it was all so unpredictable. It constantly keeps you on the edge.

Mayur More: When Pushkar (Mahabal, co-creator and director), told me the story, I was dumbfounded because I had never seen or heard anything like this. I was like: 'Wow, this guy wants to make something very special and let me support him.' I got the narration just two days before shooting... till then I didn't know what was happening! So all my reactions on set — and in the series — are automatically of surprise! (Laughs)

These are ordinary people caught in very extraordinary circumstances. How did you build empathy and relatability with them?

Mayur: What was constant on my mind was that if such a thing happened to me in life, how would I react. I just did another crime show before this and that gave me some insight into the psyche of a killer, particularly things like what pushes a man to pull the trigger and kill another man? It is scary and fascinating.

Palak: Sometimes, certain situations happen



Mayur More and Palak Jaiswal in the series

Mayur: It was challenging in all aspects — mentally, physically, emotionally. The emotional scenes did take a toll. In the beginning, we were going to shoot it in a linear fashion, and I was happy that I could take it one day at a time. But then, the decision was made to shoot non-linear and I got quite nervous because I had already prepped to do things in a certain way. Also, I had only one or two takes to do some scenes and that brought on added pressure. But in hindsight, it worked out well.

The weather was challenging. It was hot in Nagpur and we had to run around a lot. Then we shifted to Uttarakhand, and it was very cold there, with scenes that demanded we jump into ice-cold water. It was tough but I had fun because I got a chance to do something which I enjoy.

Palak: For me, the challenge began from the script level. I had to figure out this girl, her mental make-up and motivations. At every bend, the boy and girl have two choices and it was important for me to gauge why she was going with one choice over another.

We shot a lot at midnight and early mornings. Our sleep schedules had gone for a toss. On one occasion, my stunt double couldn't perform a certain stunt and I volunteered to do it myself. I ended up doing quite a few stunts myself. For my debut project, this was as demanding, but also as creatively satisfying, as it could be.

Mayur: Maintaining continuity was a challenge. We have shot the entire series wearing one set of clothes.

in life that push one to the extreme, but what these two characters have to go through is unimaginable. This is a mockumentary, it is a fictionally written story but it is shot in a documentary format telling people that it has happened in real life... but it is a fictional story! It is complicated in form and yet, I feel that the girl I play is relatable in many ways... she lives a life that many girls in our country

live. She also has a moral compass and that comes into play several times, forcing her to make a decision. Very few people have the intent to kill. But circumstances in life push her into it, and that could happen to anyone.

Given the format, were the challenges of filming more mental than physical?

Priyanka Roy

COMING UP

t2

What: Comedy Night Live in association with t2
Where: Kala Mandir
When: Today, 6.30pm onwards
Expect: Anamika Kala Sangam will present Comedy Night Live in Calcutta for the first time. There is the promise of an unforgettable evening of laughter and entertainment. The star-studded lineup features some of India's most loved comedians, including the



hilarious Ali Asgar, mimicry genius Sanket Bhojani, the lively duo Tannaz and Bakhtryar Irani, and the popular twin entertainers Chinki-Minki. Adding spice to the event will be actor Nusrat Jahan, who will join in for a "roasting" segment. The one-of-a-kind comedy extravaganza brings together a mix of stand-up, mimicry and banter, making it a must-attend event. Anamika Kala Sangam's attempt to bring such high-profile entertainment

to the city reflects its commitment to promoting art and culture. Get ready for a night packed with fun, laughter and memories.

Organiser speak: "We are thrilled to host Comedy Night Live, curated by Anamika Kala Sangam, featuring top comedians of the country. We are bringing this first-of-its-kind experience to Calcutta," said Sanjay Agarwal, chairman of the organising committee of Anamika Kala Sangam.

The Telegraph
CLASSIFIED *What's On!* **WednesDélite**

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ই.এম বাইপাস মেট্টো ক্যাশ এন্ট্রি থেকে

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AAMAR BOSS STAR RAKHEE SHARES ANECDOTES OF DILIP KUMAR, AMITABH BACHCHAN AND AMJAD KHAN AS SHIBOPROSAD MUKHERJEE TURNS INTERVIEWER FOR t2

Nandita Roy and Shiboprosad Mukherjee's upcoming film *Amar Boss* has sparked anticipation and excitement among fans, as they eagerly wait for the release of the film in theatres on May 9. One of the highlights of *Amar Boss* is the presence of Rakhee, who returns to films after 22 years. Having enjoyed a dazzlingly successful career of charming performances across genres, Rakhee plays a caring mother to her devoted son (played by Shiboprosad) in the mother-son relationship film. Recently, Rakhee and Shiboprosad got together for a t2 chat at Taj Bengal. Excerpts.

Shiboprosad: Through this conversation, I would like you to share some rare anecdotes from the past. You had once shared a story of Dilip Kumar rustling up an omelette on the road during the shoot of *Shakti*.

Rakhee: No, not an omelette. Dilip Saab would arrive on the set and ask for the pages of his dialogue. He carried an ink pen and would take the sheaf of papers and go sit underneath a tree. One day, I saw him slapping himself. He was reprimanding himself. "You don't remember your lines," he was telling himself.

One day, as we were travelling to a location for the shoot, he told us to stop and follow him. Everyone from the unit followed him to a shop by the roadside. "How are you, Bhatty?" he asked the shopkeeper. Once the shopkeeper realised who he was speaking to, he was flabbergasted. I cannot conjure up that expression here. "Do you have a saucepan?" Dilip Saab asked him. "Yes," he said. "Do you have a brick?" The shopkeeper said that he can get it for him. "Give me a saucepan, water and a brick," Dilip Saab told him. Then we understood the whole story. Dilip Saab had already packed 20 kgs of biryani in the cars for everyone from the unit. But that biryani did not have eggs in it. So he decided to rustle up boiled eggs by the roadside.

I remember another incident where the director Ramesh Sippy wasn't satisfied with one of the scenes for a romantic song... Dilip Saab was supposed to turn in a certain way... and he made Dilip Saab give retakes of that shot 27 times to get it right. "You are looking like Dilip Kumar and not the character," said Sippy.

Shiboprosad: You had fallen off a horse once...

Rakhee: Since I did not want a 'duplicate' to do that scene. I wanted to do it on my own. I was



Rakhee and Shiboprosad Mukherjee

a perfectionist. You see this mark on my forehead? I got it during the shoot of a Dulal Guha film. I believe that to gain something, you have to give. Gains often come with sacrifices.

Shiboprosad: You had worked with Amitabh Bachchan in quite a few films. How did you develop that chemistry? Tell us about the *Jacket* episode!

Rakhee: This was years before Amitabh Bachchan became the Amitabh Bachchan. I was shooting for a film directed by Lekh Tandon and Amitabh had come to the shoot with his friends. We had planned to go to Agra. Amitabh said that he would also come along with us. We all got into the Ambassadors. It was winter and suddenly we were hit with a foul smell. We all tried to figure out the source of that smell and finally realised it was coming from his jacket. He told us that someone had got the jacket for him from Kabul. We doused the jacket with all the perfumes we could get our hands on.

Shiboprosad: He would call you Bourani.

Rakhee: Yes, that is because of Jaya (Bachchan)... Jaya would call me Bourani. I never thought of him as my hero... and because of that our chemistry developed.

Shiboprosad: When I first met you to narrate the story of *Amar Boss*,

you had told me then that you had seen our films and your favourite film is *Haamti*.

Rakhee: Yes, because the story was beautiful. Many years ago, the film *Lalu Bhulu* was made for children. But then people stopped making children's films. I really liked the subject of *Haamti*... and I feel you should make the film in Hindi.

Shiboprosad: You had told me then that if we offer you a script which has a heart-touching, sweet subject and you like it, then

you'll act in our film. You had told me that it had to be a bound script and that I had to go to Bombay and narrate it to you there.

Rakhee: Shibu has this brightness in his eyes! They speak volumes. I had seen Shibu act in *Haamti* and then I came up with the suggestion that he play the role of my



A moment from *Amar Boss*, which releases in theatres on May 9

son in *Amar Boss*. The lullaby we shot for rings so true in the film.

Shiboprosad: How was your experience working with Nandita Roy?

Rakhee: She has that hint of a smile at the corner of her mouth... and that's how we would understand that the scene had come out well.

Shiboprosad: In the film, you are our boss!

Incidentally, (actor) Amjad Khan would call you: 'Teen foot ka Dada.'

Rakhee: Amjad was a very learned man, a thorough gentleman... but after *Sholay*, his image went through a complete transformation. Kids were scared of him. I had done many films with him. Things got to such a stage that he faced problems while trying to get his daughter admitted to a school. He then came to me and told me the situation and then I had a word with the principal, who had harboured this wrong notion about him, which was built around his public image post *Sholay*. "I told her that he (Amjad) was a thorough gentleman."

Shiboprosad: Who is your closest friend in the film industry? We hear that it is Salim Khan.

Rakhee: Gulzar, Salim and Javed (Akhtar) wrote scripts for the productions of GP Sippy. I have known Salim since then. I have seen Salman Khan and his brothers since they were kids. Talking about the Salim-Javed screenplays, Javed would write all the witty lines. And as an actor, I would always focus on the scripts.

Shiboprosad: Give us the names of a few eateries in Calcutta which you would like to visit.

Rakhee: Radhu Babu's shop, Chung Wah, Waldorf... we would enjoy the cutlet from a coffee shop... I can't remember the name. Also, the *beguni* and *phuluri* from a sweet shop in Dum Dum.

Shiboprosad: *Amar Boss* has a connection with Sukumar Ray. When I had called you for your home address, you had recited a poem. Rakhee: (Starts laughing).

XAVIER'S COMMERCE SOCIETY CELEBRATES 17TH EDITION OF INSIGNIA WITH POMP AND SPLENDOUR, WITH THE TELEGRAPH



Team XCS posed for a group picture with comedian Harsh Gujral on the first day.



The inaugural ceremony was graced by Rev. Fr. Dominic Savio, SJ, principal of St. Xavier's College (Calcutta); Rev. Fr. Joseph Kulandai, SJ, vice-principal of department of commerce (Morning); and Rev. Fr. Peter Arockiam, SJ, vice-principal of department of commerce (Evening). Alongside student representative Riya Kedia, they lit the ceremonial lamp, officially marking the commencement of the fest.



Moderated by Kushal Jindal and Pratham V. Shah, the entrepreneurship event's 'Gilded Gamble' round saw Priyanshu Saraf and Raunak Khetan from St. Xavier's College emerge victorious with sharp strategy and creativity.

The commerce society of St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata, unfurled an engaging chapter of ambition and strategy with the 17th edition of Insignia 2025, in association with The Telegraph. Themed 'Reign of Resurgence', the national-level management fest, was held across

three days at the college campus, recently. With the college campus decked out keeping the theme of grandeur and imperial France in mind, the event witnessed participation of students from across India, including Shri Ram College of Commerce, Hansraj College, Master's Union, Bhawanipur Education Society

College, J.D. Birla Institute, Scottish Church College and more. From intense boardroom battles to spontaneous wit on stage, the fest was a confluence of intellect, creativity and camaraderie. Celebrity guest Harsh Gujral crowned the fest with his comic brilliance. Glances.



On the first day, moderator Yug Patwari addressed participants of the event named Contingent, where students segregated themselves into groups as per their choice in different departments, like entrepreneurship, marketing or finance, and the game was conducted simultaneously in different departments. Students of Master's Union, a B-school in Haryana, delivered an outstanding performance to claim victory.



One of the highlights, the Best Manager competition featured a rigorous three-round selection process, testing managerial skills, strategy and problem-solving, and concluded with a challenging stress interview by industry professionals. After a fiercely competitive series of rounds, Shaurya Dalal from Shri Ram College of Commerce emerged winner of the best manager competition, demonstrating exceptional prowess in all three rounds.

The auction segment of Public and International Relations event saw participants showcase sharp strategy. Suhas Pulluru and Manraj Singh Bhullar from team Master's Union emerged victorious.

Joint secretaries of XCS Hemaansh Mohta (left) and Devansh Jogani.



"At Xavier's Commerce Society, we strive to create a platform where ideas meet execution, where learning goes beyond textbooks. Insignia brings together the brightest minds to push boundaries and redefine excellence in commerce and management," said Devansh. Hemaansh added: "In XCS, we unlock potential and grow together."

Shreyas Dutta (t2 intern)
Pictures courtesy: XCS



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1 **KIARA ADVANI** slayed her MET Gala debut in a jaw-dropping Gaurav Gupta gown, celebrating motherhood and transformation. The sculpted gold breastplate, with its striking umbilical cord detailing, symbolized both defiance and legacy. Paired with a dramatic white cape that echoed André Leon Talley's bold style, Kiara's look was a powerful narrative of strength, femininity, and personal evolution.

2 **KING KHAN**'s MET Gala debut was a bold fusion of heritage and maximalism. Striking his signature pose at the blue carpet in his floor-length Tasmanian wool coat, with exaggerated peak lapels and monogrammed Japanese horn buttons, SRK radiated old-world sophistication in Sabyasachi. Tailored wool trousers and a pleated cummerbund completed the look. The Bengal Tiger Head Cane, crafted in 18k gold and encrusted with sapphires and diamonds, was a statement of cultural pride. Custom necklaces, stacked rings, and bracelets added opulence, while gold-rimmed sunglasses and immaculate hair finished off his regal, powerful ensemble.

3 **Embroroidered Gurmukhi** his cape as **DILJIT DOSA** debut. In a custom Prabha he embodied regal splen Bhupinder Singh's grand gold embroidery, and the white Golecha jewellery, and bespoke Cartier-insp cultural pride. A fearless Asian heritage, Diljit's le with bold elegance and s

2025 MET GALA: SRK'S ROYAL DEBUT, KIARA'S COUTURE MOTHERHOOD & DILJIT'S PUNJABI CHIC LED A NIGHT OF BLACK DANDYISM, TAILORING FANTASIES AND THEATRICS

Shah Rukh Khan colonised the MET Gala, sporting a Sabyasachi tuxedo-cape so opulent, it seemed capable of rewriting global economies. Making history as the first male Bollywood actor to step onto the iconic carpet, King Khan approached the evening with the kind of grace that suggested he was already ruling New York City. With a diamond-studded tiger cane and the aura of royalty, SRK turned the 'Superfine: Tailoring Black Style' theme of MET Gala 2025 into pure South Asian swagger — think vintage Calcutta darbar meets Harlem Renaissance drip. Shah Rukh didn't walk the carpet. He conquered it.

This year's co-chairs of 'fashion's biggest night' were Colman Domingo, Lewis Hamilton, A\$AP Rocky, Pharrell Williams, and, of course, MET Gala matriarch, Anna Wintour. LeBron James was an honorary chair but couldn't attend due to a knee injury. There's also a host committee made up of 25 other stars.

The exhibition was inspired by the concept of Black dandyism, a style that reclaims and celebrates the history and transformation of Black fashion.

Rooted in the experiences of the African diaspora, the theme highlighted the powerful intersection of fashion, identity, and autonomy, showcasing how Black individuals have evolved from being stylised as symbols of wealth to becoming global trendsetters in their own right.

Kiara Advani debuted at the MET Gala in a Gaurav Gupta creation titled *Bravehearts*. Crafted to honour the maternal form, her look featured a metallic breastplate shaped like a heart and a sinuous train that symbolised an umbilical cord. The silhouette whispered futuristic muncore. Pregnancy

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couture has officially entered the MET chat, and Kiara was not the only participant. But she was, by far, its most glowing member.

And then "Punjabi *aa gaye oye!*" Diljit Dosanjh waltzed in, royal as ever, in a white Prabal Gurung number embroidered with Gurmukhi calligraphy. With heirloom-inspired jewels stacked on his fingers and that signature turban tilt, Diljit channelled Sikh royalty with a smirk and a wink, in the way only he can.

MET Gala veteran Priyanka Chopra Jonas kept it easy in Balmain polkas, while husband Nick Jonas swooned over her, helping her with her dress and her huge hat.

Our desi couturiers weren't just background credits. Sabyasachi Mukherjee and Manish Malhotra had an undeniable presence on the carpet, dressing stars from Bollywood royalty to international glamazons. MM

debuted at the MET too while dressing several attendees.

Natasha Poonawalla was, as expected, a walking editorial — corseted, bejewelled and over-the-top, while paying homage to the Parsi side of her family. Isha Ambani pulled off an Anamika Khanna number but the highlight was her borrowed heirloom jewellery from mum Nita Ambani.

It was an evening drenched in hues of blacks, whites and greys. The trends were loud and deliberate: pinstripes, wide-brimmed hats, hip-hugging skirts, tuxedo gowns, textual elements and dandy-inspired maximalism. Think Josephine Baker meets Andre Leon Talley in a Harlem speakeasy. From Kiara Advani's umbilical cord-feature to Colman Domingo's pleated cape tribute, the night was dripping in homage and haute.

In the end, 'Superfine: Tailoring Black Style' wasn't just a theme. It was a revolution in satin lapels and ancestral memory, and this year, the MET didn't whisper fashion — it roared.



3

4 **MANISH MALHOTRA** cut a sleek silhouette as he became the second Indian couturier to hit the MET Gala red carpet after Sabyasachi. He owned the night with a daring fusion of Indian opulence and global edge. A sharply cut white shirt, sleek black trousers, and a gilded waistcoat were topped with a cape dripping in gold threadwork. Symbolic brooches — a tiger and an elephant — while emeralds sparkled like they knew their worth. The ensemble was drenched with Indian embroidery with a signatory MM flare.

4

letters shone proudly on ANJH made his MET Gala white ensemble, dour, evoking Maharaja deur. A white turban, intricate sweeping cape set the tone, including a ceremonial sword inspired necklace, added layers of mix of dandism and South look redefined masculinity striking detail.



5 **PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS**'s 2025 Met Gala look is a study in elegance, but it feels somewhat restrained for the biggest fashion night. The polka-dotted Balmain dress and the emerald Bvlgari necklace are standout elements. The wide-brimmed hat and gloves nod to dandism, but they don't quite elevate the ensemble beyond the expected. Though beautiful, it feels safe — not quite pushing boundaries as one might hope on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum.

5

6 Apart from dressing Shah Rukh Khan for his debut, **SABYASACHI MUKHERJEE** also walked the blue carpet for the second time, in a look that was a masterstroke in cultural reclamation. A quilted ivory overcoat paired with a pearl-buttoned shirt and sculptural cummerbund exuded regal elegance. The emerald choker and marigold-plumed hat were bold symbols of postcolonial pride, blending Indian aristocracy with Black Dandyism.

6

7 A fishtail skirt crafted from heirloom Parsi Gara saris, bold Gara jacket and lace bralette created a dynamic blend of strength and grace. Intricate embroidery, pearls, and an imperial purple lining made the Manish Malhotra ensemble the perfect outfit for the maximalist in **NATASHA POONAWALLA**.

7

8 **ISHA AMBANI**, a regular attendee of the Gala, embodied modern maharani glamour in a sculpted Anamika Khanna look — corseted white bodice, tailored black trousers, and a sweeping embroidered coat. Her heirloom jewels, including a 1931 Maharajah necklace and beige diamond ring, added gravitas. A pearl dragonfly clip and surreal brooches sealed the look in quiet magnificence.

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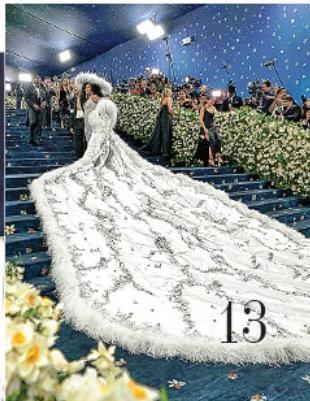
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9 RIHANNA did not just announce her third baby with A\$AP Rocky, she shut down the MET Gala carpet in peak power-dresser mode. Dressed in custom Marc Jacobs, she served boss energy in a boned corset, slit wool skirt, cropped jacket and a classic shirt layered with a polka-dot tie. Known for never disappointing at the MET Gala, RiRi's sleek top hat, diamond brooches and baby bump sealed the slay.

10 KIM KARDASHIAN's black leather cowgirl look with a side of pearls and diamonds certainly made an entrance, but let's be honest, nothing will ever top that wet Mugler moment from Camp: Notes on Fashion in 2019. This year's Western-inspired ensemble was sharp, sleek and covered in diamonds, but it was a little less "wow" and a little more "well, it's Kim." Still, she managed to stand out. Just not quite like she did in 2019.



11 SABRINA CARPENTER

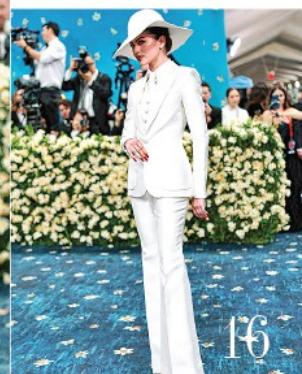
ditched the trousers and stole the show in a custom oxblood Louis Vuitton blazer-bodysuit. Sharp, sparkly and sass-laced, the Pharrell-approved look was pure power-play — no pants, no problem. With a sun-kissed glow and cheeky charm, Sabrina served tailored drama in an OOTN that undoubtedly makes it to our best-dressed list!

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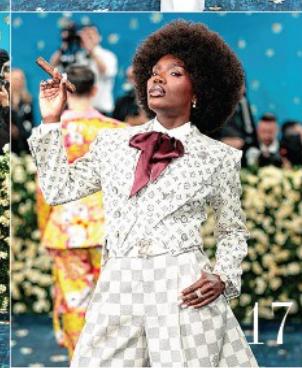
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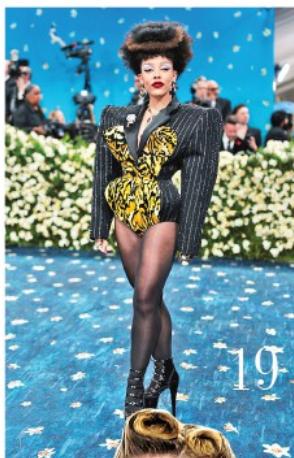
14 KENDALL JENNER ticked every expected MET Gala box — tailored, tasteful, vaguely referential — but her look felt more committee-approved than couture moment. Chic? Sure. Groundbreaking? Not quite. If Superfine: Tailoring Black Style was the homework, the supermodel handed in the neatest, most predictable answer in the class.

15 EMMA CHAMBERLAIN, one of the first to arrive at the 2025 MET Gala and a host this year, turned heads with her daring take on pinstripes. While many played it safe, Emma opted for a backless pinstripe suit dress with a train, pairing it with sheer gloves... both fashion-forward and far from boring.

16 DIANA ROSS didn't just return to the MET Gala after 22 years — she descended like royalty draped in sequins and sentiment. Her custom white gown, dreamed up with her son Evan and designer Ugo Mozie, came complete with an 18-foot train embroidered with the names of her children and grandchildren. It was part couture, part family tree, and wholly fabulous. Honestly, if legacy dressing is the new trend, everyone else might as well pack it up.

17 ZENDAYA's look, a perfect example of sleek tailoring with no pinstripes in sight — thank God! The suit was paired with a matching hat and she flaunted red nails and an engagement ring that stole the show.

17 Monogrammed LV, burgundy silk bowtie, checkerboard shorts — **DOECHII** stunned 2025 MET Gala. The cigar in hand? Pure confidence. She waltzed onto the blue carpet with Tiffany jewellery and a natural Afro, nailing the theme. Definitely one of the best-dressed of the evening!



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18 **GIGI HADID** brought chic to the MET Gala carpet in a custom golden Miu Miu gown, honouring Zelda Wynn Valdes and the theme. Styled by Gabriella Karefa-Johnson, she worked a sleek Victory Roll and silver accessories like a Goddess. No sign of "her man" Bradley Cooper, but she did mention him on the blue carpet. A little MET Gala tease never hurt!

19 Featuring a velvet ocelot-print bustier and exaggerated shoulder pads, **DOJA CAT** commanded attention in a Marc Jacobs pinstriped bodysuit. The bold, '80s-inspired look, paired with black tights and Kiki boots, was a striking mix of sharp lines and fluidity, underscored by a dramatic wool jacket top. Going pantless was definitely trending on the blue carpet.

20 **LIZZO** arrived with platinum blonde hair and a custom Christian Siriano gown that screamed 'drama'. A cream and black corset paired with a cropped jacket and a diamond-studded floating skirt had everyone turning heads.



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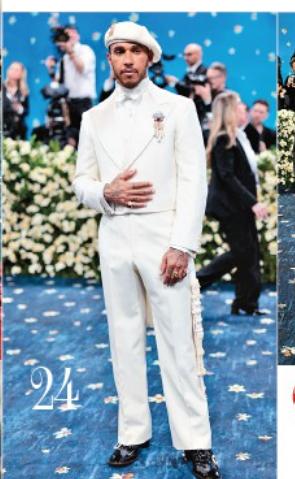


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21 We love a Manish Malhotra moment on the MET Gala carpet! **COCO JONES** served up elegance in a cream and white embroidered masterpiece, complete with a dramatic train and shirrless chic beneath the sharp-lapelled coat. With a dazzling diamond necklace, Jimmy Choo heels, a loooong braid and floral inspiration cascading down her look, she was a vision for sure.

22 Very few nailed the theme like co-host **TEYANA TAYLOR**. In custom Ruth E. Carter and Marc Jacobs, she shut it down in oxblood stripes, a feathered fedora, red cane, wallet chains, gloves, and a durag with a train featuring the text "Harlem Rose". Sharp tailoring? Check. Swagger? Off the charts. Best dressed of the night — no contest.

23 **CARDI B**'s green velvet Burberry suit had the Internet jokingly comparing her to seaweed, but she pulled it off with style. The Burberry look, complete with a daring back cutout, plunging neckline and Afro hair, showcased her fearless fashion flair.



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20 **LEWIS HAMILTON** He not just owned the racetrack! Formula One legend **LEWIS HAMILTON** dropped jaws on the MET steps. In custom Grace Wales Bonner — silk tailcoat, cowrie sash, vintage jewels — he served culture, couture, and co-chair realness. Fastest on four wheels and best dressed? By a mile!

21 **BAD BUNNY** was back at the MET — and hotter than a Caribbean summer. In a brown Prada suit, glittery gloves and a pava hat worthy of a revolution, he repped Puerto Rico with flair, sparkle and just the right amount of chaos. Benito, bendito... you've still got it.

22 **COLMAN DOMINGO** didn't just co-chair the 2025 MET Gala — he pulled off the most elegant costume change of the night. Draped in a regal cobalt Valentino cape paying homage to André Leon Talley, the actor hit the carpet looking every bit the fashion statesman. But plot twist! Off came the cape to reveal a razor-sharp monochrome blazer, polka-dot scarf, pinstripes and Boucheron bling. A lesson in dandy drama? Without a doubt.

23 **JENNIE**, the K-pop icon, showed up in a stunning white strapless Chanel dress. With pearl details, a split hem and a chic two-tone boater hat, she brought major Audrey Hepburn vibes. She embodied old Hollywood glam. Black dandyism? Not so sure.

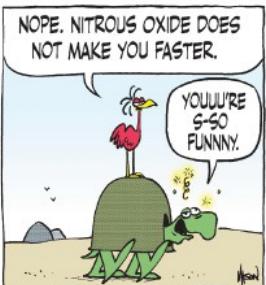
24 As co-chair of the 2025 MET Gala, **A\$AP ROCKY** brought Harlem to the red carpet in a self-designed AWGE parka — double-breasted, dandy, and very "dad-on-duty chic." Inspired by Marmot jackets from his youth, it came tailored like a tux and trimmed with velcro (because why not!?) He styled it with satin boxers, Louboutins and Bulgari bling.

25 MET debutante **CHAPPELL ROAN** didn't follow the theme — she was the theme. Draped in glittery pink and gold with matching tear tracks and drag flair, Roan turned the MET Gala into her own Pink Pony Club. Subtle? Never heard of that!

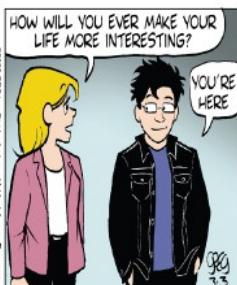
Sanjali Brahma

Pictures: Reuters and Getty Images

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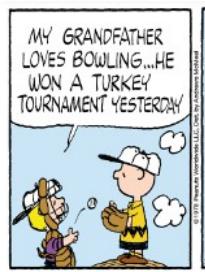


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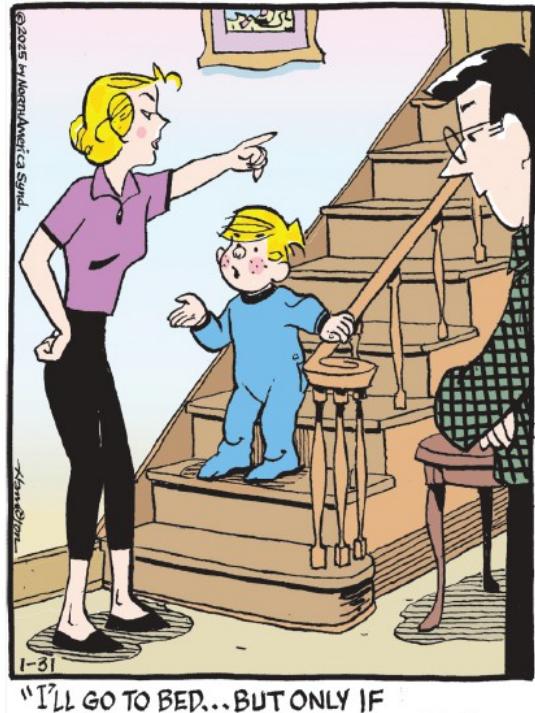


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"I'LL GO TO BED... BUT ONLY IF RUFF AND HOT DOG COME WITH ME."



Beauty enthusiasts from across the city browsed shelves, swatched shades on their hands, and exchanged favourites as Alok Sharma, YSL India's education manager, conducted two live masterclasses. His top tip was "start your foundation from the centre of the face and blend outwards."



Jyotee Khatian stopped by to celebrate the launch of YSL's new lipstick line. "I love it! I'm wearing it right now and can't wait to wear more of it," said the designer, her fresh Nykaa haul, her arm candy!



Neha Gandhi Binrajka was smart in a crisp black-and-white look and a Prada bag.



Fashion designer Deepika Agarwal stood out in a vivid blue dress and statement red loafers. "I'm loving being at the event today at Nykaa for the YSL launch. It's as vibrant as the hostess (Davina) herself," she said. "I picked up the shade Blush Connection from the collection, and I love it!"

Nikita Bhalla was all smiles as she posed with her pick of the day — YSL perfume!

YSL'S NEW RANGE OF LIPSTICK LAUNCHED AT NYKAA LUXE ON PARK STREET. t2 WAS THERE

Teen bold shades by Yves Saint Laurent hit the shelves of Nykaa Luxe, Park Street, on May 2. The launch which saw The Inks line of lipsticks debut in Calcutta, was hosted by fashionista Davina Thacker and Prerna Jalan. A bunch of chic Calcuttans came by to swatch, sit, and shop. t2 dropped by.



Hosts Davina Thacker and Prerna Jalan at the YSL x Nykaa event. Davina, in a vibrant printed co-ord set, and Prerna in sculptural black with gold accents, were dressed for the event. "YSL is one of my favourite brands. I love their bags, lipsticks, everything. This new launch is fierce and bold, just like me," smiled Davina. Prerna loved its "high-quality payoff and wearable shades."



Simran Kaur Walia (right), praised the long-stay matte and glossy options while Jyoti Luthra enjoyed the workshop. "I enjoyed the session on make-up tips and also meeting so many women and chit-chatting with them!" said Jyoti.



We loved Gitanjali Agarwal's eclectic street style at the event. Her picks from the brand? Lip shades and perfumes!



Khushboo Chokhani checked out the new YSL Inks at Nykaa Luxe and "loved how it didn't dry the lips".



Riddhima Chawla brought an extra dose of warmth with her adorable son by her side, who lit up the room with his wide-eyed smile. "It was a shopping date with my four-year-old! Since Mother's Day is around the corner, he wanted me to buy myself a gift, and what's better than the YSL The Inks... fab, smooth!" she shared.

"I am a very lipstick person, so I was keen on checking this range from YSL, who are known for their beauty products, and I must say I wasn't disappointed," said Nikita Agarwal.

Anoushka Kundu (12 intern)
Pictures: Pabitra Das

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SUNDAY OPEN

Shah Rukh Khan in *Jawan*

Among the films featuring double roles in recent times, my favourite is the Sauvik Kundu-directed science-fiction Bengali action-comedy *Boomerang*. Jeet as a scientist, Dr. Samar Sen and the andro-humanoid clone robot Amar, and Rukmini Maitra as Samar's wife Isha Sen and a robot Nisha, played their respective double roles with much conviction and elan. (*Which is your favourite film/series featuring a double role in recent times?.. October 29*)

Kajal Chatterjee

Charlie Chaplin made an audacious doppelganger film that served as a condemnation of fascism and the horrific Nazi German regime. Chaplin plays both lead roles, of a dictator who rises to power and of the Jewish barber. The result is a terrifically funny comedy of errors but one with blazingly furious messaging about the importance of standing against injustice. In the dual role, Chaplin does some of his best work, particularly in a poignant ending monologue that proved he was an acting icon beyond

the era of silent films.

Srijan Mukherjee

Shah Rukh Khan's blockbuster *Jawan* stands out as my favourite film featuring a double role in recent times. This intensely engrossing action thriller unleashes a fantastic blend of electrifying excitement and thought-provoking exploration of pressing issues with sensitivity and sensibility. Shah Rukh Khan as the protagonist Vikram Rathore and his father Azad Rathore meticulously embodied the striking traits of his well-written characters, emphasising on core values such as compassion, empathy and awareness with unwavering conviction.

As soldiers, they displayed unyielding determination, advocating tirelessly for the marginalised and the wronged. They boldly challenged our corrupt system with hard-hitting queries, exposing its deep-rooted injustices and instilling a spirit of enquiry among the audience. While Shah Rukh illuminated the screen with his magnetic charm, his leading ladies remarkably matched his verve, augmenting the ensemble performance to perfection. Every element, ranging from witty one-liners to its impactful finale, was adeptly crafted, and culminated in an intellectually stimulating cinematic experience.

Special shout-out to director Atlee and music composer Anirudh Ravichander for delivering a chart-

topping music album.

Aayman Anwar Ali

There are a few movies which I like most but among them I preferred *Gemini Man* which I saw today. This was a very entertaining movie and had me glued from start to finish. Will Smith as the assassin Henry Brogan did an amazing job. The younger Will threw me off a little at first because we have been watching his older self for so long, but it was awesome. The computer-generated version took a few scenes to get used to but it was still amazing. Not sure why the critics gave it such a poor review. Great family movie, definitely would watch it again. The action scenes are captivating and watching Will pursue himself was something I never thought I'd wanted to see. Definitely would recommend it to those who like fast-paced action movies.

Debojit Swarnaker

My favourite film featuring a double role in recent times, no doubt, is the intriguing and gripping Netflix mystery-thriller *Do Patti*, whose story revolves around twin sisters named Saumya and Shalini. Kriti Sanon played the dual role and delivered a power-packed, emotionally-charged and captivating performance. She shone in both roles and truly stole the limelight. The way the Bolly actress portrayed the characters of the two sisters, who are poles apart in personality, was just fantastic and praiseworthy.

Sourish Misra

YOUR FAVOURITE FILM BASED ON INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

My favourite film set in 1947 is Ritwik Ghatak's classic titled *Meghe Dhaka Tara*. When the rest of India was joyfully celebrating the Independence of the country, millions of Bengalis (as well as Punjabis) suddenly found themselves 'alien' in the land owned by their ancestors for generations. Their world turned upside down with many of their family members ruthlessly murdered by communal elements. The ones who were lucky to escape the butchery fled their land and managed to reach and barely survive in what is now known as West Bengal. Bereft of shelter, resources and livelihood, the plight of these refugees was heartbreaking.

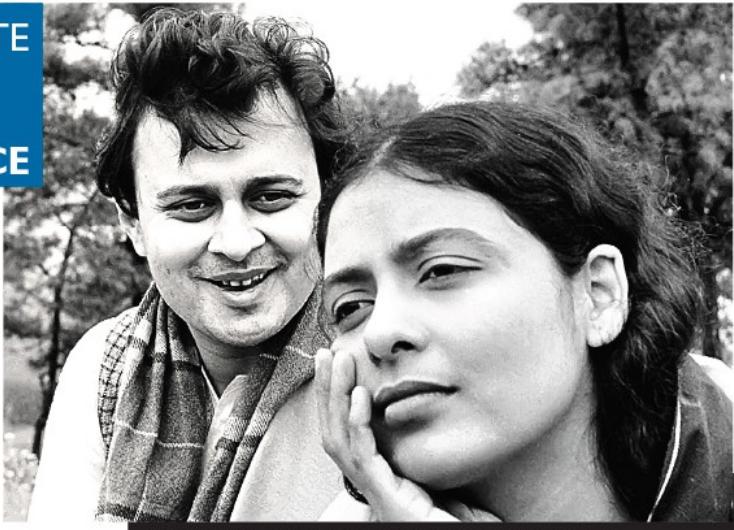
Meghe Dhaka Tara focuses on one such unfortunate family whose members had to sacrifice everything so that India could turn independent. The daily toll, struggle and sacrifice of the young refugee girl Nita (Supriya Choudhury) to survive

against all odds and somehow sustain herself and her larger family with dignity, was heartrending. Her sincerity and honesty through all her troubles made the film all the more poignant. It also provided a lesson of sorts on the kind of hatred and horror that communalism can unleash on humanity. (*Which is your favourite film/series set in 1947?.. November 8*)

Kajal Chatterjee

Year 1947 is an unforgettable watershed for each and every Indian. After a long struggle, the country was finally liberated from British rule. And from this perspective I would like to talk about a film named *Gandhi*, starring Ben Kingsley in the titular role.

The film offers an authentic

Anil Chatterjee and Supriya Choudhury in *Meghe Dhaka Tara*

representation of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. At the 55th Academy Awards in 1983, this movie won eight Oscar awards from 11 nominations, with multiple nominations in many other award ceremonies held that year. Watching *Gandhi*, I felt proud to be an Indian and have someone of his stature as my fellow countryman. A must-watch

for today's generation who have little knowledge of the stories of India's Independence struggle.

Mahatma Gandhi is depicted in the film as a great modern pantheistic prophet, but the camera does not shy away from revealing moments of possible colossal vanity that only paint him as human, just like the rest of us.

Debojit Swarnaker

My favourite film set in 1947 is Deepa Mehta's 1998 movie *Earth*. The masterpiece was based on a novel named *Cracking India*, written by Bapsi Sidhwa. Starring Aamir Khan, Rahul Khanna, Nandita Das and Shabana Azmi, this fine period drama on friendship, love and heartbreak during the Partition of India in 1947 was our country's entry for the 1999 Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film. It received the top honour that year at the Asian Film Festival.

What I like the most about this film is the way the ace film-maker gave the Partition theme a human touch in its storyline. Aamir, Rahul and Nandita were splendid, their characterisations so real and so memorable. All three delivered fantastic performances. I also love the film's songs. The tracks, which are composed by legendary music director A.R. Rahman and written by another legend Javed Akhtar, were very melodious. My fav number from the movie is *Rut aa gayee re*.

Sourish Misra